



**BRITISH SCHOOL**  
**SALALAH**

## **RESIDENTIAL & TRIPS POLICY**

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Person Responsible: Head of School

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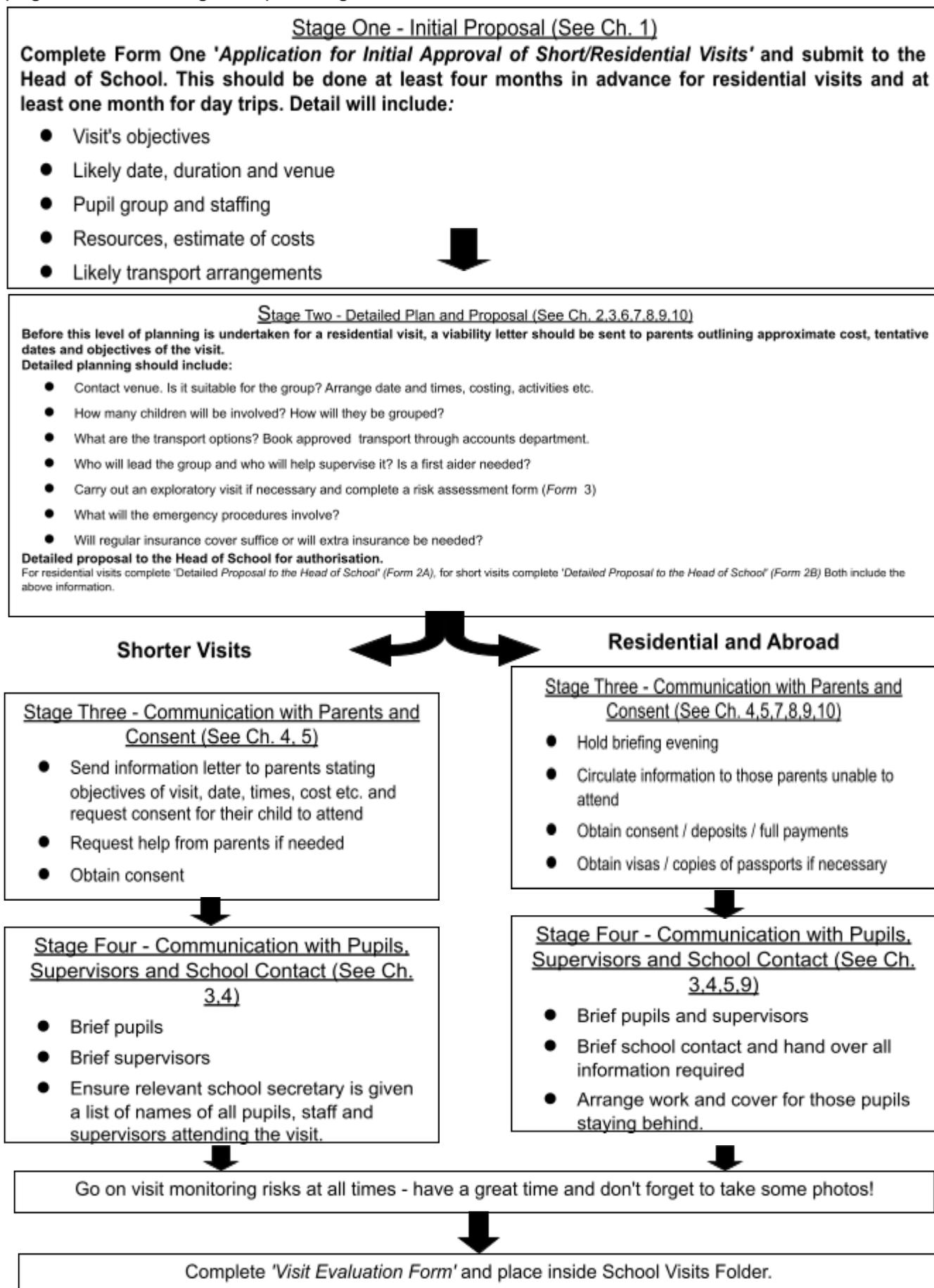
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# INTRODUCTION

1. Children can derive a good deal of educational benefit from taking part in visits out of school. In particular, they have the opportunity to undergo experiences not available in the classroom. Visits help to develop a pupil's investigative skills, and longer visits in particular, encourage greater independence. This policy is designed to ensure that pupils, parents and staff at BSS stay safe and healthy on school visits.
2. Most school visits take place without incident and it is clear that teachers are already demonstrating a high level of safety awareness and the potential hazards which the policy refers to should not discourage teachers from undertaking school excursions.  
No amount of planning can guarantee that a visit will be totally incident free, but good planning, proper risk assessment and compliance to simple and practical safety measures can significantly reduce the number of accidents. The management of health and safety on visits is part of a school's overall policy on health and safety and the safety of our children and staff is the primary objective of this policy.
3. This policy does not cover work experience.
4. It is recommended that group leaders read the booklet entitled 'Handbook for Group Leaders' (DFES 2002), before embarking on a visit. This offers concise advice in an easy to read format.
5. This policy is based extensively on the guidance provided in the DfEE's handbook, 'Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits'.

# PLANNING A VISIT

This page charts the stages of planning a visit



# 1. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR VISITS

## Legal framework

6. Under the U.K. Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 employers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees. Employers are also under a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of anyone else on the premises or anyone who may be affected by their activities. This includes participants in off-site visits. If we are to adopt the best of British practice, we, at the British School, should work to the same principles.
7. **Currently there is no legislation under Omani law that is applicable. The School will therefore follow best British Practice.**
8. The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 (U.K.), made under the 1974 Act, require employers to:
  - assess the risks of activities (see **Risk assessment** in Chapter 2 (paragraphs 32 - 41));
  - introduce measures to control those risks;
  - tell their employees about these measures.

Also under the Health and Safety legislation employees must:

- take reasonable care of their own and others' health and safety;
  - cooperate with their employers over safety matters;
  - carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions;
  - inform the employer of any serious risks.
9. These duties apply to all school visits. Teachers and other staff in charge of pupils also have a common law duty to act as any reasonably prudent parent would do in the same circumstances.

## Approval for visits

10. The British School has written procedures inside this policy document for arranging visits which teachers should follow. This includes procedures for the approval of certain types of visit.
11. Although the Board of Governors is responsible for health and safety, decisions about visits are usually delegated to the Head of School. Their agreement must be obtained before a visit takes place.
12. See Chapter 11, Form 1 for an initial approval application.

### **13. The Leadership Team at BSS**

The Leadership Team at BSS should ensure a risk based control framework exists for the safety of our children and staff on educational visits. This control framework should provide assurance that School Leadership and Teachers comply with this policy

- provide clear written guidelines for teachers including advice on risk assessment;
- assess proposals for certain types of visit;
- provide emergency telephone contact for the duration of the visit where necessary;
- ensure training needs have been addressed;
- provide access to named staff for advice;
- maintain appropriate insurance cover;
- have in place procedures to monitor and review safety during off-site visits and activities.

### **Head of School**

14. The Head of School should:

- ensure that the visit has a specific and stated objective;
- ensure that group leader shows how their plans comply with the school's policy guidelines, including the school's health and safety policy document and that group leader reports back after the visit;
- ensure that they are informed about less routine visits well in advance;
- assess proposals for certain types of visit, which should include visits involving an overnight stay or travel outside Oman.
- Assurance and compliance audits, carried out as per PARA 221.

15. The Heads of School should ensure that visits comply with the school's policy guidelines and the school's own health and safety policy. Ensure that the group leader is competent to monitor the risks throughout the visit.

16. Be clear about their role if taking part in the visit as a group member/supervisor. They should follow the instructions of the group leader who will have sole charge of the visit.

17. The Heads of School should ensure that:

- adequate child protection procedures are in place;

- all necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins;
- the risk assessment has been completed and appropriate safety measures are in place;
- training needs have been assessed by a competent person and the needs of the staff and pupils have been considered;
- the group leader has experience in supervising the age groups going on the visit and will organise the group effectively;
- the group leader or another teacher is suitably competent to instruct the activity and is familiar with the location/centre where the activity will take place. See **School-led adventure activities** in Chapter 8 paragraphs 147 - 149;
- group leaders are allowed sufficient time to organise visits properly;
- non-teacher supervisors on the visit are appropriate people to supervise children. See **Vetting suitability** in Chapter 3 paragraphs 69 - 70;
- ratio of supervisors to pupils is appropriate. See **Ratios** in Chapter 3 paragraphs 61 - 66;
- the Head of School has approved the visit;
- parents have signed consent forms;
- arrangements have been made for the medical needs and special educational needs of all the pupils;
- adequate first-aid provision will be available;
- the mode of travel is appropriate, and in compliance with Chapter 6 – **Road Transport**.
- travel times out and back are known including pick-up and drop-off points;
- there is adequate and relevant insurance cover. See Chapter 7 **Insurance**;
- the trip is adequately financed with a sufficient contingency.
- they have the address and phone number of the visit's venue and have a contact name;
- a school contact has been nominated (this may be the head teacher) and the group leader has details;
- the group leader, group supervisors and nominated school contact have a copy of the agreed emergency procedures;
- the group leader, group supervisors and nominated school contact have the names of all the adults and pupils travelling in the group, and the contact details of parents and the teachers' and other supervisors' next of kin;

- there is a contingency plan for any delays including a late return home.

### **Group leader**

18. One teacher, the group leader, should have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit and should have regard to the health and safety of the group. However, the group leader must not be the designated first aider. The group leader should have been appointed or approved by the Head of School. The group leader should:

- obtain the head teacher's prior agreement before any off-site visit takes place;
- follow the Board of Governors' regulations, guidelines and policies;
- appoint a deputy and a first aider;
- clearly define each group supervisor's role and ensure all tasks have been assigned;
- be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age range;
- be suitably competent to instruct pupils in an activity and be familiar with the location/centre where the activity will take place. See **School-led adventure activities** in Chapter 8 paragraphs 147 - 149;
- be aware of child protection issues;
- ensure that adequate first-aid provision will be available;
- undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the visit including the briefing of group members and parents;
- undertake and complete a comprehensive risk assessment. See **Risk assessment** in Chapter 2 paragraphs 32 - 41;
- review regularly undertaken visits/activities and advise Head of School where adjustments may be necessary;
- ensure that teachers and other supervisors are fully aware of what the proposed visit involves;
- have enough information on the pupils proposed for the visit to assess their suitability or be satisfied that their suitability has been assessed and confirmed;
- ensure the ratio of supervisors to pupils is appropriate for the needs of the group. See **Ratios** in Chapter 3 paragraphs 61 - 66.
- consider stopping the visit if the risk to the health or safety of the pupils is unacceptable and have in place procedures for such an eventuality;
- ensure that group supervisors have details of the school contact;

- ensure that group supervisors and the school contact have a copy of the emergency procedures;
- ensure that the group's teachers and other supervisors have the details of pupils' special educational or medical needs which will be necessary for them to carry out their tasks effectively;
- observe the guidance set out for teachers and other adults below.

## **Teachers**

19. Teachers on school-led visits act as employees of the Board of Governors, whether the visit takes place within normal hours or outside those hours, by agreement with the Head of School and governors.

20. Teachers must do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group and act as any reasonable parent would do in the same circumstances. They should:

- follow the instructions of the group leader and help with control and discipline;
- consider stopping the visit or the activity, notifying the group leader, if they think the risk to the health or safety of the pupils in their charge is unacceptable.

## **Adult volunteers**

21. Non-teacher adults on the visit should be clear about their roles and responsibilities during the visit. Non-teacher adults acting as supervisors must:

- do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group;
- not be left in sole charge of pupils except where it has been previously agreed as part of the risk assessment;
- follow the instructions of the group leader and teacher supervisors and help with control and discipline;
- speak to the group leader or teacher supervisors if concerned about the health or safety of pupils at any time during the visit.

## **Responsibilities of pupils**

22. The group leader should make it clear to pupils that they must:

- not take unnecessary risks;

- follow the instructions of the leader and other supervisors including those at the venue of the visit;
- dress and behave sensibly and responsibly and be sensitive to local codes and customs;
- look out for anything that might hurt or threaten themselves or anyone in the group and tell the group leader or supervisor about it.

23. Any pupils whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the group may be stopped from going on the visit. The curricular aims of the visit for these pupils should be fulfilled in other ways wherever possible.

## Parents

24. Parents should be able to make an informed decision on whether their child should go on the visit. The group leader should ensure that parents are given sufficient information in writing and are invited to any briefing sessions.

25. The group leader should also tell parents how they can help prepare their child for the visit by, for example, reinforcing the visit's code of conduct. Parents should also be asked to agree to the arrangements for sending a pupil home early and who will meet the cost.

26. Special arrangements may be necessary for parents for whom English is a second language.

27. Parents will need to:

- provide the group leader with emergency contact number(s);
- sign the consent form (see Model Form 6 in Chapter 11);
- give the group leader information about their child's emotional, psychological and physical health which might be relevant to the visit (by means of the consent form).

28. See Chapter 5 **Communicating with Parents**. For **Using a Tour Operator** see Chapter 9 paragraphs 176 - 178.

## 2. PLANNING VISITS

### General

29. Whether the visit is to a local park, museum or swimming pool, or includes a residential stay in Oman or abroad, it is essential that formal planning takes place before setting off. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties which may arise and making plans to reduce them. The Head of School - who is responsible for planning visits - will usually delegate the detailed planning to the organiser of the visit or the group leader. The Head of School must satisfy his/herself that the person planning the visit is competent to do so and has the necessary relevant experience.
30. The Head of School should satisfy themselves that the visit has been planned effectively and that risks are minimised.

### Risk assessment

31. In practice, risk assessments are always carried out by the group leader. An assessment should be completed well before the visit, and should be approved by the Head of School in all cases. (see risk assessment Form 3 Chapter 11).
32. A risk assessment for a visit need not be complex but it should be comprehensive. It does not generally require technical formulae or professional health and safety expertise. But specialised information for some visits may be necessary and the Head of School should ensure that the person assessing the risks is competent to do so.
33. A formal assessment of the risks that might be met on a visit should have the aim of preventing the risks or reducing them. Pupils must not be placed in situations which expose them to an unacceptable level of risk. Safety must always be the prime consideration. If the risks cannot be contained then the visit must not take place.
34. The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:
- what are the hazards?
  - who might be affected by them?
  - what safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
  - can the group leader put the safety measures in place?
  - what steps will be taken in an emergency? Please bear in mind that outside Salalah, ambulance services do not exist in many locations, so if immediate emergency response is required, this will have to be generally provided by the teachers, or indeed the teacher should have adequate means to get to a hospital using their own transport.

35. The person carrying out the risk assessment should record it and give copies to all teachers/supervisors on the visit, with details of the measures they should take to avoid or reduce the risks. The Head of School should also be given a copy so that approval, as necessary, can be given with a clear understanding that effective planning has taken place.
36. Frequent visits to local venues such as swimming pools may not need a risk assessment every time. Nevertheless, it is essential not to become complacent. A generic assessment of the risks of such visits should be made at regular intervals, and careful monitoring should take place.
37. The group leader and other supervisors should monitor the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action as necessary.
38. Before booking a visit the group leader should obtain a written or documentary assurance that providers such as tour operators have themselves assessed the risks and have appropriate safety measures in place. Please note within Oman, there are no regulations for tour operators to have or provide full assurance and medical repatriation.
39. Detailed advice on risk assessment can be obtained from the Health and Safety Executive (U.K.), which has issued a revision of its booklet, *Five Steps to Risk Assessment*. **Form 3 in Chapter 11 for a basic risk assessment format.**
40. The group leader should take the following factors into consideration when assessing the risks:
- the type of visit/activity and the level at which it is being undertaken;
  - the location, routes and modes of transport;
  - the competence, experience and qualifications of supervisory staff;
  - the ratios of teachers and supervisory staff to pupils;
  - the group members' age, competence, fitness and temperament and the suitability of the activity;
  - the special educational or medical needs of pupils;
  - the quality and suitability of available equipment;
  - seasonal conditions, weather and timing;
  - emergency procedures;
  - how to cope when a pupil becomes unable or unwilling to continue;
  - the need to monitor the risks throughout the visit.

## Exploratory visit

41. An exploratory visit shall be made by any teacher who is to lead a group abroad or on a residential visit or who is to instruct or lead the group in an outdoor activity such as trekking in a location that is not familiar to them.

42. In other cases the group leader should undertake an exploratory visit, wherever that is possible, to:

- ensure at first hand that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit;
- obtain names and addresses of other schools who have used the venue;
- obtain advice from the manager;
- assess potential areas and levels of risk;
- ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and pupils in the group;
- become familiar with the area before taking a group of young people there.

43. If in the last resort an exploratory visit is not feasible then the group leader will need to consider how to complete an adequate assessment of the risks. A minimum measure would be to obtain specific information by letter from the venue, from other schools who have recently visited it, and from local organisations such as tourist boards or ministries.

44. Detailed advice on particular categories of visits which carry specific risks is provided in Chapters 8 **Types of Visit** and 9 **Visits Abroad**.

45. BSS will take new groups of pupils to the same location each year. As some factors will change from year to year, it is prudent to re-assess the risks each time - even when the group leader stays the same. It may be useful to evaluate each completed visit and keep a record. Model Form 4 in Chapter 11 provides a suggested format.

### **Other considerations**

46. Other factors which should form part of the planning stage include:

- the facilities/equipment the group will need to take on the visit;
- the facilities/equipment to be provided at the venue;
- staff training needs;
- the designation of someone to record the details of the visit and to carry accident forms etc.;
- transport arrangements;
- insurance arrangements;

- information to the provider;
- communication arrangements;
- supervision ratios;
- contingency measures for enforced change of plan or late return;
- information to parents;
- preparing pupils;
- emergency arrangements;
- arrangements for sending pupils home early;
- arrangements for those children not taking part in residential visit and communication of this to their parents.

47. Further information on these issues is provided in subsequent chapters.

### **Financial planning**

48. The group leader should ensure that parents have early written information about the costs of the visit, how much will come from school funds, and how much each parent will be charged or asked to contribute. Parents should be given enough time to prepare financially for the visit. A breakdown of the costs down into subheads such as travel, hostel, meals etc. should form part of this information where possible.

49. The Accountant & Operations Manager should ensure that banking arrangements are in place to separate the visit's receipts from other school funds and from private accounts.

50. The Head of School/group leader should reach a pre-agreement with parents on whether any funds left surplus after the visit will be returned to parents or retained for another visit.

### **Charging for visits**

51. Day trips to local sites should be paid for by parents at least 2 days in advance of the visit, when applicable. The cost should include;

- contribution towards coach transport
- entrance charges to museums, galleries (where applicable)

52. Deposits for residential visits, as a rule, should cover 25% of the total cost.

53. Full payment for residential visits should be completed at least one week in advance of the departure date. Failure to do so may result in the loss of a place on the trip.

54. If a child is unable to attend a visit the school should be notified in writing for the deposit to be reimbursed. Full payment will be reimbursed at the discretion of the Accounts Manager..

### **First aid**

55. First aid should form part of the risk assessment. Before undertaking any off-site activities the group leader should assess what level of first aid might be needed. On any kind of visit the group leader should have a good working knowledge of first aid and ensure that an adequate first-aid box is taken. For adventurous activities, visits abroad or residential visits at least one of the group's teachers or adult helpers will be a fully-trained first-aider. All adults in the group should know the emergency procedures plan.

56. The First Aider, where possible, should be a member of the teaching staff. If this is not possible, a parent first aider should be designated. The designated first aider should be named in the second proposal to the Head of School. See Form 2.

57. The minimum first-aid provision for a visit is:

- a suitably stocked first-aid box;
- a person appointed to be in charge of first-aid arrangements.
- on residential visits the first aider should hold a 'sick call' each morning to encourage pupils to report any illness and to review any cases already reported.

Other considerations when considering first-aid needs should include:

- the numbers in the group and the nature of the activity;
- the likely injuries and how effective first aid would be;
- the distance of the nearest hospital; and how the casualty will get to the hospital, especially if outside the Muscat Municipality.
- the telephone numbers of the nearest hospital and also the emergency services telephone numbers.
- if there is any doubt with regard to the treatment or recovery time of a reported injury the group leader should immediately contact the School Nurse at BSM for advice.

58. First aid should be available and accessible at all times. The minimum contents for a travelling first-aid box where no special risk has been identified is as follows:

- a leaflet giving general advice on first aid;
- six individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings;

- one large sterile unmedicated wound dressing approximately 18 cm x 18 cm;
- two triangular bandages;
- two safety pins;
- individually wrapped moist cleansing wipes;
- one pair of disposable gloves;
- a resuscitator (for hygienic mouth to mouth resuscitation) would also be useful.

59. For further advice on first aid and the contents of first aid kits group leaders must consult with the School Nurse at BSM.

## 3. SUPERVISION

### Ratios

60. It is important to have a high enough ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any visit. The factors to take into consideration include:

- sex, age and ability of group;
- pupils with special educational or medical needs;
- nature of activities;
- experience of adults in off-site supervision;
- duration and nature of the journey;
- type of any accommodation;
- competence of staff, both general and on specific activities;
- requirements of the organisation/location to be visited;
- competence and behaviour of pupils;
- first aid cover.

### Ratios for a Day Visit

61. Staffing ratios for visits are difficult to prescribe as they will vary according to the activity, age, group, location and the efficient use of resources. However, at BSS our adult/pupil ratios for visits to local historical sites and museums or for local walks, in normal circumstances, are:

- 1 adult for every 6 pupils in school years 1 to 3 (under 5s reception classes should have a higher ratio of X adults for every X pupils);
- 1 adult for every 10 pupils in school years 4 to 6;
- 1 adult for every 12 pupils in school year 7 onwards.

### Ratios for Residential Visits / Higher Risk Activities

62. When visits are to remote areas or involve hazardous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly. The same consideration should be given to visits abroad (see Chapter 9 paragraph 182) or residential visits (see Chapter 8 paragraph 169 - 171). Some non-residential visits with mixed groups will need a teacher from each sex. At BSS the adult/pupil ratios for residential visits or those that involve hazardous activities (e.g. horse / camel riding, rock climbing, canoeing etc.) are as follows;

- **1 adult for every 8 pupils in school years 4 to 6;**
- **1 adult for every 10 pupils in school year 7 onwards.**

63. All residential visits with mixed groups will need a teacher from each sex.

64. There should be a minimum of one teacher in charge. For ratios for swimming see Chapter 8, paragraphs 161 - 163.

65. In addition to the teacher in charge there should be enough supervisors to cope effectively with an emergency.

### **Parents/Volunteers**

66. Where there is more than one teacher/supervisor a group leader should be appointed who has authority over the whole group. If more than one school is involved an overall group leader should be identified, usually the person with the most experience in leading such visits.

67. Where a high adult: pupil ratio is required, it is not always feasible to use school staff alone. Parents/volunteers may be used to supplement the supervision ratio. They should be carefully selected and ideally they should be well known to the school and the pupil group.

### **Vetting suitability**

68. The group leader needs to be clear about procedures for vetting volunteers who wish to be supervisors, in particular for residential visits. The suitability of potential supervisors should be assessed by the group leader and the head teacher at an early stage of the planning process. Where there is any doubt about suitability further investigations should be made and if any doubt remains the adult should not be allowed to help supervise the visit. Similar considerations should be made for adults who have no supervisory role but who wish to take part in the visit. There should be no volunteers who are allowed to drive children of the BSS.

69. The group leader and BSS staff will remain responsible for the pupils' health and safety on all trips even when a parent or volunteer is also in attendance. If parents or volunteers are accompanying a school trip to provide extra supervision, BSS staff will still retain an overall duty of care for all the pupils on the trip.

70. A DBS check must be obtained for parents or volunteers who:-

- a. Will be responsible for supervising an overnight stay
- b. Regularly volunteer on residential trips
- c. Will be solely in charge of pupils

71. Parents or volunteers who only accompany on one-off outings to trips that do not involve overnight stay are not required to apply for a DBS check.

72. For the protection of both adults and pupils, all adult supervisors should ensure that they are not alone with a pupil wherever possible.

## **Supervisors' responsibilities**

73. All adult supervisors, including teachers and parent/volunteer helpers, must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. It may be helpful to put this in writing. In particular, all supervisors should be aware of any pupils who may require closer supervision, such as those with special needs or those likely to cause trouble. Teachers retain responsibility for the group at all times.

## **Competences if leading a higher-risk activity**

74. If the school is leading an adventure activity, such as canoeing, the Principal must ensure that the group leader and other supervisors are suitably competent to lead or instruct pupils in the activity, bearing in mind that some pupils may be novices. Competences should be demonstrated by holding the relevant National Governing Body (NGB) award where it exists.

## **Head counts**

75. Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of pupils should take place, particularly before leaving any venue. All supervisors should carry a list of all pupils and adults involved in the visit at all times. Pupils, particularly in school years 1 to 3, should be easily identifiable, especially if the visit is to a densely populated area. Brightly coloured caps, T shirts or a school uniform can help identify group members more easily. Pupils should not wear name badges. It may be useful to provide pupils with badges displaying the name of the school and its emergency contact number. The group leader should establish rendezvous points and tell pupils what to do if they become separated from the group.

## **Remote supervision**

76. The aim of visits for older pupils may be to encourage independence and investigative skills, and some of the time on visits such as trips abroad and fieldwork may be unsupervised. The group leader should establish during the planning stage of the visit whether the pupils are competent in remote supervision and should ensure parents have agreed to this part of the visit. The group leader remains responsible for pupils even when not in direct contact with them.

77. Parents will be told, before the visit, whether any form of remote supervision will take place.

78. See **Preparing pupils for remote supervision** in Chapter 4 paragraphs 87 - 88 and for **Remote supervision during adventurous activities** see Chapter 8 paragraphs 150 - 154. For **Supervision on transport** see Chapter 6 paragraphs 118 - 120.

## **Alcohol during school trips and residentials**

79. BSS employees, parents or volunteers on a trip must not consume alcohol at any time during the trip.

## 4. PREPARING PUPILS

### General

80. Pupils who are involved in a visit's planning and organisation, and who are well prepared, will make more informed decisions and will be less at risk. Providing information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for a school visit. Pupils should clearly understand what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Pupils must understand what standard of behaviour is expected of them and why rules must be followed. The lack of control and discipline can be a major cause of accidents. Pupils should also be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own safety and that of others.
81. Pupils should also be involved in planning, implementing and evaluating their own curricular work and have opportunities to take different roles within an activity. This should include considering any health and safety issues.

### Participation of pupils

82. The group leader should ensure that the pupils are capable of undertaking the proposed activity. Pupils should be encouraged to take on challenges during adventurous activities but should not be coerced into activities of which they have a genuine fear.
83. Pupils, whose behaviour is such that the group leader is concerned for their safety, or for that of others, should be withdrawn from the activity. On residential visits the group leader should consider whether such pupils should be sent home early. Parents and pupils should be told in advance of the visit about the procedures for dealing with misbehaviour, how a pupil will be returned home safely and who will meet the cost.

### Equal opportunities

84. Every effort should be made to ensure that school journeys and activities are available and accessible to all who wish to participate, irrespective of special educational or medical needs, ethnic origin, sex, religion etc. All young people should be encouraged to participate in as wide a range of activities as possible. If a visit is to cater for pupils with special needs, a suitable venue should be selected.

### Information to pupils

85. The group leader should decide how information is provided, but must ensure that the pupils understand key safety information. For some pupils on overnight visits it will be their first experience away from home on their own and in the close company of other pupils. Pupils should understand:
- the aims and objectives of the visit/activity;
  - the background information about the place to be visited;

- basic foreign words where appropriate;
- relevant Omani and foreign culture and customs (see Chapter 9 **Visits Abroad**);
- how to avoid specific dangers and why they should follow rules;
- why safety precautions are in place;
- why special safety precautions are in place for anyone with disabilities;
- what standard of behaviour is expected from pupils;
- appropriate and inappropriate personal and social conduct including sexual activity;
- who is responsible for the group;
- who is responsible for first aid;
- what not to bring back either within Oman or from abroad such as drugs, knives etc.;
- what to do if approached by anyone from outside the group;
- rendezvous procedures;
- what to do if separated from the group;
- emergency procedures.

86. A checklist to give to pupils is at Model Form 5 in Chapter 11.

87. For residential visits all group members should carry the address and telephone number of the accommodation in case an individual becomes separated. This applies to exchange visits when pupils will also need to know about any ground rules agreed between the group leader and host family.

88. Where visits involve multiple activities with differing requirements each activity will need to be assessed and separate information provided. Pupils should be aware of who is responsible in any instances where the group leader has delegated responsibility to another member of staff or instructor.

89. If at any time there is a change in the planned schedule new activities should be assessed and pupils provided with the appropriate information.

### **Preparing pupils for remote supervision**

90. During any time that remote supervision takes place the group leader must ensure that pupils are aware of the ground rules and are adequately equipped to be on their own in a group. The size of each group should also be considered. As a minimum pupils should have the following:

- telephone numbers and emergency contacts if lost;

- money;
- maps and plans and any other information for them to act effectively;
- location of local telephones and the appropriate coins;
- a knowledge of how to summon help;
- a knowledge of out of bounds areas or activities;
- identity cards and a rendezvous point.

91. It is important that pupils are told not to go off on their own, are given clear instructions about permitted remote supervised activities and understand and accept the ground rules. See **Remote supervision** in Chapter 3 paragraphs 74 - 76 and for **Remote supervision during adventurous activities** see Chapter 8 paragraphs 150 - 154.

### **Transport and pupils**

92. Pupils using transport on a visit should be made aware of basic safety rules including:

- Intervene if you believe the vehicle you are travelling is going too fast or not obeying traffic signals.
- arrive on time and wait for the transport in a safe place;
- do not rush towards the transport when it arrives;
- wear your seatbelt and stay seated whilst travelling on transport;
- never tamper with any of the vehicle's equipment or driving controls;
- bags must not block aisles or cause obstructions;
- never attempt to get on or off the moving transport;
- never lean out of or throw things from the window of the transport;
- never get off a vehicle held up by traffic lights or in traffic;
- never run about or pass someone on steps or stairs while transport is moving;
- never kneel or stand on seats;
- never throw objects on the transport;
- never distract or disturb the driver or impede the driver's vision;
- stay clear of doors after boarding or leaving the transport;

- after leaving the vehicle, always wait for it to move off before crossing the road;
- crossing the road one adult to stand in the road to ensure all traffic is stopped, one to go ahead and one to bring up the tail;
- Individuals are to be reminded to always look left, right and left before crossing the road;
- if you feel unwell, tell a teacher or supervisor.

93. The group leader should ensure that pupils know what to do if they miss the scheduled departure time.

### **Pupils with special educational and medical needs**

94. Head teachers should make every effort to include pupils with special educational or medical needs in school visits, whilst maintaining the safety of everyone in the group. Special attention should be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

### **Pupils with medical needs**

95. Additional safety measures to those already in place in school may be necessary to support pupils with medical needs during visits. Arrangements for taking medication and ensuring sufficient supplies for residential visits may be required.

96. All teachers supervising visits should be aware of a pupil's medical needs and any medical emergency procedures. Summary sheets should be held by all teachers, containing details of each pupil's needs and any other relevant information provided by parents. If appropriate, a volunteer teacher should be trained in administering medication, if they have not already been so trained, and should take responsibility in a medical emergency. If the pupil's safety cannot be guaranteed, it may be appropriate to ask the parent or a care assistant to accompany a particular pupil.

97. The group leader should discuss the pupil's individual needs with the parents. Parents should be asked (usually by means of consent form (Form 6) to supply:

- details of medical conditions;
- emergency contact numbers;
- the child's GP's name, address and phone number;
- information on whether the pupil has spent a night away from home before and their ability to cope effectively;
- written details of any medication required (including instructions on dosage/times) and parental permission to administer;

- parental permission if the pupil needs to administer their own medication or agreement for a volunteer teacher to administer;
- information on any allergies/phobias;
- information on any special dietary requirements;
- information on any toileting difficulties, special equipment or aids to daily living;
- special transport needs for pupils who require help with mobility.

98. All teachers supervising the visit should be given the opportunity to talk through any concerns they may have about their ability to support the child. Extra help should be requested if necessary, e.g. a care assistant.

99. If teachers are concerned about whether they can provide for a pupil's safety or the safety of other pupils on a trip because of a medical condition, they should seek general medical advice from the school nurse or further information from the pupil's parents. For further DfES guidance see *Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs: A Good Practice Guide*.

100. The group leader should check that the insurance policy covers staff and pupils with pre-existing medical needs.

### **Pupils with special educational needs**

101. The School should already be familiar with the nature of a pupil's special educational needs. Any limitations or problems the pupil may have should be taken into account at the planning stage and when carrying out the risk assessment. Off-site visits may pose additional difficulties for a pupil with SEN and the behaviour of some pupils may prove challenging. The following factors should be taken into consideration:

- is the pupil capable of taking part in and benefiting from the activity?
- can the activity be adapted to enable the pupil to participate at a suitable level?
- will additional/different resources be necessary?
- is the pupil able to understand and follow instructions?
- is the pupil's behaviour likely to place other children in danger?
- will additional supervision be necessary?

102. It may be helpful to the pupil if one of the supervisors already knows them well and appreciates their needs fully. The group leader should discuss the visit with the parents of pupils with SEN to ensure that suitable arrangements have been put in place to ensure their safety.

## 5. COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS

### General

103. Parents should be informed in writing of any off-site activity or visit unless it is a regular part of the school curriculum which parents have already been informed about through the school prospectus or a letter. Seeking annual consent for such routine visits may be appropriate.

### Information to Parents

104. Before residential visits, or when the pupils are to travel abroad or engage in adventure activities, parents should be encouraged to attend a briefing meeting where written details of the proposed visit should also be provided. There should be alternative arrangements for parents who cannot attend or who have difficulty with communication in English.

105. Parents need to be aware that the teachers and other adult supervisors on the visit will be exercising the same care that a prudent parent would. The following information on matters that might affect pupil health and safety should be given to parents:

- dates of the visit;
- visit's objectives;
- times of departure and return - parents must have agreed to meet their child on return;
- the location where the pupils will be collected and returned;
- mode(s) of travel including the name of any travel company;
- the size of the group and the level of supervision including any times when remote supervision may take place;
- details of accommodation with security and supervisory arrangements on site;
- details of provision for special educational or medical needs;
- procedures for pupils who become ill;
- names of leader, of other staff and of other accompanying adults;
- details of the activities planned and of how the assessed risks will be managed;
- standards of behaviour expected in respect of, for example, alcohol, sexual behaviour, smoking and general group discipline including prohibited items. **This information may take the form of a code of conduct which parents should sign;**
- what pupils should not take on the visit or bring back;

- details of insurance taken out for the group as a whole in respect of luggage, accident, cancellation, medical cover, any exceptions in the policy and whether parents need to arrange additional cover;
- clothing and equipment to be taken;
- money to be taken;
- communication arrangements between parents and pupils, parents and school contact etc.
- the information to be given by parents and what they will be asked to consent to;
- on exchange visits, the details of the host families. For example, whether they have hosted any of the school's pupils before;
- details on the cost of the visit. See **Financial planning** paragraphs 49 - 51 and **Charging for visits** paragraphs 52 - 55 in Chapter 2.

## Parental consent

106. Group leaders should seek consent for:

- non-routine visits involving pupils in school years 1 to 3 (no matter how short the visit);
- adventure activities;
- visits abroad;
- other residential visits;
- remote supervision.

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

108. A parental consent form should be completed for each pupil in the group. Besides conveying the parents' consent it could also form the basis for obtaining details required. If a tour operator is used it may be sensible to ask them what information to obtain. General issues to consider include:

- any allergies/phobias the pupil may have;
- any medication the pupil is taking (if so what the dosage is and who is to administer it);
- whether the pupil administers their own medication;

- any contagious or infectious diseases suffered within the family during the preceding 4 weeks, and any other recent illnesses suffered by the pupil;
- the name, address and phone number of the pupil's GP;
- any special/medical dietary requirements;
- whether the pupil suffers from travel sickness;
- information on any toileting difficulties;
- whether the pupil has any night time tendencies such as sleepwalking (for residential visits);
- the pupil's ability to swim in the pool or sea and their level of safety awareness;
- any other information which the parent thinks should be known;
- the parental home and daytime phone numbers and addresses;
- an alternative contact, with their phone number and address.

109. The contents of a consent form for a parent to sign will vary according to the type of visit. See Model Forms 6 A and B **Parental consent for a school visit** and Model Form 7 **Consent for swimming activities** in Chapter 11.

### **Medical consent**

110. This should form part of the parental consent form. Parents should be asked to agree to the pupil's receiving emergency treatment, including anaesthetic or blood transfusion, as considered necessary by the medical authorities. If parents do not agree to this, head teachers may decide to withdraw the child from the visit - given the additional responsibility this would entail for the group leader.

111. Doctors might be reluctant to operate on a pupil unless assured that the group leader had parental authorisation to agree to such treatment. It is sensible to include a translation of the medical consent, as signed by the parent, in the relevant foreign language.

### **Other consent**

112. Parental consent should be obtained before pupils can be carried in a teacher's private vehicle. The vehicle type should be compliant with the schools transport Policy (see section 6 Planning Transport)

### **Early return**

113. The group leader should tell parents they will be expected to fund and possibly supervise the early return of a pupil attending a residential trip whose conduct gives cause for concern.

## **Contact with parents during the visit**

114. Head teachers should ensure that parents can contact their child via the school contact and the group leader in the event of a home emergency, and that they have a number to ring for information in the event of an incident during the visit or a late arrival home. Parents should therefore:

- know the destination details;
- be aware of the emergency contact arrangements at home (particularly important during holiday periods when the school may be closed) and at all the venues the group will visit;
- provide contact numbers for day and night use in an emergency.

115. This will be done by means of the consent form.

## **Pupils' contact with parents**

116. Group leaders should arrange for parents to be told by the school of the group's safe arrival. One way of doing this is by a 'telephone tree' whereby one parent contacts an agreed group of parents who then contact a further group. But pupils may wish to speak to their parents individually. The group leader should decide whether this would be appropriate and such arrangements should be agreed with parents and pupils before the visit takes place. Parents concerned after a phone call should contact the school contact.

## 6. PLANNING TRANSPORT

### General

117. Driving can be dangerous outside Salalah; there is a risk of hitting wandering camels and goats on the road. Rainfall can cause sudden and severe flooding in dry riverbeds and on roads that cross them. The standard of Omani roads is generally good. Driving standards in Oman are not always as disciplined as those in the UK, and the rate of traffic accidents in Oman is significantly higher. A recent WHO report rated Oman in the bottom 10 worldwide for road safety when ranking road accident fatalities per 100,000 of the population.

- Selection of a mode transport with the approved transport provider is mandatory. If the mode of transport is not available, the visit should be rescheduled and if this is not possible cancelled,
- The number of driving hours required for the journey and length of the driver's day (including non-driving hours); this should also include consideration if the driver has to travel long distances on pick-ups. The risk assessment should consider all driving hours and routing for all trips out of Salalah.
- passenger safety;
- the competence and training of the driver to drive the proposed vehicle and whether the driver holds the appropriate valid licence;
- capacity and experience of driver to maintain concentration - whether more than one driver is needed to avoid driver fatigue;
- type of journey - will the visit take place locally or will it include long distance driving i.e. motorways?
- traffic conditions;
- contingency funds and arrangements in case of breakdown/emergency;
- appropriate insurance cover;
- weather;
- journey time and distance;
- stopping points on long journeys for toilet and refreshments;
- supervision;
- Transport arrangements in Oman are to be routed through the Accounts & Operations Manager. Use form 12.
- A checklist for hire vehicles is attached at the end of this section.
- The selection of the required approved transport should comply with the following table :-

Distance	Mode of Transport
<100km	Coaster Bus or large coach (dependant on pupil numbers)
>100km	Large coach
Outside Oman (within GCC)	Large coach (driver(s) remains for the duration of trip, all travel) OR Aircraft, using approved transport on arrival.

## Legislation

118. There is no legislation in Oman covering school transport arrangements. However, the **Head of School** should satisfy themselves that all travel arrangements, including the hire of private coaches or buses, are suitable for the nature of the visit.

119. **The driver** is responsible for the vehicle during the visit.

120. **Seat belts:** All minibuses and coaches that are used to transport children on visits to and from BSS must be fitted with a seat belt for each child and the seats must face forward.

121. **Booster seats.** The following policy has been instituted with regards to the use of booster seats for children under 1:35cm in height. This is in accordance with best practice as promulgated by ROSPA guidance and UK Government legal requirements. Booster seats are not required to be worn on coach journeys nor are coach companies required to supply them. "The law does not yet require passengers under 14 years old to wear a seat belt. However, all passengers are strongly advised to wear seat belts **or** the correct child seat on all journeys." (ROSPA). This policy responds to parents' requests to make their own informed choices. Research and guidelines are ever changing, we encourage you to do your own research. It is the school's recommendation, that if a booster seat is to be used, it be one with a high back.

## 122. Guidance for Parents

Parents have the option to provide a booster seat for children under 1:35cm in height. Please note car seats are not permitted.

If parents request for their child to use a booster seat on a school coach journey, the school can only guarantee that this happens if parents follow the procedures stated below. If procedures have not been carried out as stated, pupils will instead wear the 3 point seat belt provided on the coach.

- Parents must have informed the school, in advance, if they are planning to provide a booster seat for their child. This is done through the School Office who will send out a trips notice.
- Parents provide their own booster seat, these must be named clearly. Names need to be visible from the front to allow staff/helpers and pupils to identify their seat once fitted on the coach.

- Parents must bring the named booster seat to school on the morning of the trip and leave it in the allocated area.
- Trip helpers will secure pupils in seats on the coach prior to departure.
- Booster seats will be taken off the coach at the end of the trip and located back in the allocated area in the bottom car park where it is the responsibility of parents to collect.
- Please note that the school will not be liable for any loss or damage to booster cushions.

High back booster seat (seat belt fits over the front)	Booster cushion	5 point booster/car seat (seat belt fitted at the back)
		
 Recommended		 Not allowed

**Supervision on transport**

123. The level of supervision necessary should be considered as part of the risk assessment for the journey. The group leader is responsible for the party at all times including maintaining good discipline.
124. The driver should not be responsible for supervision. All group members should be made aware of the position of the emergency door and first-aid and anti-fire equipment on transport. The group leader should also be aware of alternative routes or means of travel in the event of delay or cancellation.
125. Factors that the group leader should consider when planning supervision on transport include:
- level of supervision that will be necessary on coaches. At least two adults (one, a teacher) should travel on each coach. One supervisor should sit at the front, and one should sit next to the emergency exit at the back.
  - safety when crossing roads as part of the journey - the group leader should ensure that pupils know how to observe the safety rules set out for example in the UK Highway Code

and the UK Green Cross Code. Pedestrian crossings and traffic lights or footbridges should be used to cross roads, whenever possible.

- It should be noted that extreme caution should be taken on all pedestrian crossings and traffic lights in GCC countries as there are many “runovers” caused by unsafe driving. If at all possible avoid crossing roads and use footbridges or under passes or alter your route. Do not on any account cross a dual or multiple lane highway, use another method.
- safety on buses, trains, ferries and boats - the group leader should make clear to pupils how much or little freedom they have to ‘roam’. Misbehaviour is a main cause of accidents to children on such means of transport. Appropriate supervision and discipline should be maintained at all times. Pupils should also be made aware of what to do in an emergency and where emergency procedures are displayed;
- booking transport - the group leader should arrange for seats to be reserved well in advance to ensure that the party can travel together;
- safety of pupils whilst waiting at pick-up and drop-off points and when getting on or off transport. Pupils should be made aware of safety rules and expected standards of behaviour. See **Transport and pupils** in Chapter 4 paragraphs 89 - 90;
- safety while on stops or rests during the journey -group leaders should plan with the driver sufficient stops at suitable areas to ensure the safety of all group members including the driver. Drivers of buses and coaches must comply with local legislation covering maximum periods of driving and minimum rest periods;
- safety of the group in the event of an accident or breakdown - the group should remain under the direct supervision of the group leader or other teachers wherever possible;
- head counts, by the group leader or another delegated teacher or supervisor, should always be carried out when the group is getting off or onto transport;
- responsibility for checking that seat belts are fastened;
- consider whether a visible and easily recognisable article of clothing should be worn in common by pupils;
- pupils should be made aware that they are not allowed access to the driving area at any time;
- group members should be made aware that travel sickness tablets should only be administered to a pupil with previous authorisation from the parents;
- Vetting non-teacher drivers. See **Vetting suitability** in Chapter 3 paragraphs 69 - 70.

### Using a back-up vehicle

126. Where possible, an additional car should accompany the coach on visits made by BSS. This is necessary on all residential visits where emergency transport may be needed at unexpected times. It shall also be driven in front of the coach to show the way and help control

the speed of travel. This is an excellent control measure that reduces the risk considerably of speeding and collision. Coaches are not allowed over flyovers so the group leader should plan an appropriate route to enable this.

127. Visits that involve trips to the desert or anywhere out of GSM range should have a 4X4 vehicle to accompany the coach.

### **Hiring coaches and buses**

128. The group leader is responsible for ensuring that coaches and buses are hired using Form 12 via the Accounts Office. When booking transport, the group leader should ensure that seat belts are available for pupils and on arrival the teacher should ensure that the simple safety checklist contained within the transport checklist for excursions has been completed. Part two should then be completed at the end of the journey and sent to the member of staff responsible for booking transport.

129. If any of the group uses a wheelchair, the group leader should ensure that transport used has appropriate access and securing facilities. It may be appropriate to use portable ramps.

### **Licences and Permits**

130. There is, at present, no legal requirement to hold a licence specifically for transporting children in Oman.

131. Drivers of any vehicle must ensure that they have the correct entitlement on their licence.

### **Private cars**

132. Teachers and others who drive pupils in their own car must ensure their passengers' safety, that the vehicle is roadworthy, and that they have appropriate licence and insurance cover for carrying the pupils. Volunteers are not permitted to drive pupils in their car, unless it is the volunteers own children or during an emergency. If necessary, assurances should be requested by the head teacher. See **Vetting suitability** in Chapter 3 paragraphs 69 - 70.

133. The driver is responsible for making sure that pupils have a seat belt and use it at all times. Vehicles without seat belts should not be used.

134. Head teachers or group leaders who wish to use teachers to help transport pupils in their own cars, must ensure that they are aware of their legal responsibility for the safety of the pupils in their cars. Parents' agreement should be sought for their children to be carried in teacher's cars. It is advisable that teachers driving pupils are not put in a position where they are alone with a pupil. The group leader should arrange a central dropping point for all pupils rather than individual home drops.

**HIRE VEHICLE DRIVERS CHECKLIST**

Serial	Subject	Checked	Comments			
1.	Tyres:					
	Tread (minimum of 3mm across whole tyre)					
	Pressure; correctly inflated					
	Spare tyre fitted in good condition					
	Tyre changing kit present					
2.	Glass intact; no cracks/chips that would inhibit vision					
3.	Mirrors; side and rear view fitted and correctly set					
4.	Lights					
	Headlights; dip and beam					
	Side lights					
	Indicators; left/right, front/rear					
	Reversing light					
	Brake lights					
	Fog lights					
5.	Fluid levels:					
	Engine oil					
	Screen wash					
	Radiator level					
	Brake					
	Clutch					
	Transmission (automatic)					
6.	Seatbelts; functioning for all passengers					
7.	Brakes:					
	Foot brake test					
	Handbrake test					
	Parking brake (automatic) test					
8.	Steering wheel; check for no undue play or pulling left/right					
9.	Vehicle condition:					
	Exterior; rust, dents, scratches					
	Interior; cleanliness					
10.	Fuel; petrol or diesel					
11.	Safety/survival Equipment:					
	Item	Check	Item	Check	Item	Check
	Fire extinguisher		Hi visibility vest		Warning triangle	
	1 <sup>st</sup> Aid kit		Water		Tow rope	
	Glass breaker		Fuel		Insurance details	
	Seat belt cutter		Shovel		Emergency numbers	

## Transport Checklist for School Trips

Trip Details to be completed by Accounts & Operations Manager

<u>Trip Name</u>		<u>Destination</u>	
<u>Year Group</u>		<u>Number of children</u>	
<u>Coach Company</u>		<u>Coach VRN</u>	
<u>Departure Time</u>		<u>Return Time</u>	
<u>Trip Leader</u>		<u>No of Adults</u>	

Pre-departure checklist by security personnel.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Check</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Tyres (tread, condition, age < 4yrs)		
Windows (No cracks, visibility good)		
AC Works		
Seat belts (fitted and operational)		
Bodywork (good condition, no obvious safety concerns)		
Mirrors; side and rear fitted and correctly set		
Interior; clean and tidy		

Signed :- \_\_\_\_\_ Date :- \_\_\_\_\_

Journey Checklist – Trip Leader

Note:- to be conducted during the journey, to ensure compliance to speed requirements, road traffic regulations

<u>Item</u>	<u>Check</u>	<u>Trip Leader Comments</u>
Incidents of over speeding	Yes/No	
Incidents of harsh braking	Yes/No	
Following road traffic signals	Yes/No	
Phone usage by driver whilst driving	Yes/No	
Coach running okay, no unsafe		
<u>Other Events/Safety Feedback</u>		

Signed :- \_\_\_\_\_ Date :- \_\_\_\_\_

Note:- Signed and completed form to Accounts & Operations Manager for filing, will be used for any immediate recommendations and for improving future transport service and provider.

## 7. INSURANCE

### General

135. The group leader must ensure, well before the group departs, that adequate insurance arrangements are in place. Advice regarding cover and arrangements can be obtained through the Bursar.
136. The Group Leader should write to the parents to tell them which responsibilities the school accepts and the scope of any insurance cover the school is to arrange. It is advisable to make copies of the insurance schedule available to parents as early as possible in the booking process.

### Insurance cover for visits

137. Insurance policies are legal documents. They will impose conditions, limit the cover, and exclude certain people or activities. Insurance companies/travel firms can advise on particular types of insurance. However, the following are examples of cover which may be appropriate to many types of school visit:
- employers liability;
  - public liability;
  - personal accident cover for teachers, other adults, and pupils;
  - costs of medical treatment;
  - specialised risk activities (often excluded from standard policies) and the costs of evacuation for medical reasons when abroad;
  - damage to or loss of hired equipment (check the wording of the hire agreement);
  - programmed and non-programmed activities;
  - transport and accommodation expenses in case of emergency;
  - compensation against cancellation or delay;
  - compensation for loss of baggage and personal effects including money;
  - legal assistance in the recovery of claims; and failure or bankruptcy of the centre or travel company.
  - **Please note that it is currently NOT POSSIBLE to obtain travel insurance for residential trips in the Sultanate. The school manages this by making a charge per student for the trip and holding these funds centrally as a means of self-insurance to cover any cancellations and refunds that may be required. Please see the Bursar for details.**

138. Additional arrangements may be necessary to obtain insurance cover for activities abroad and activities of a potentially hazardous nature. The Group Leader should scrutinise carefully the list of exclusions in the policy. If there is any doubt about the cover the Accounts Manager should be consulted and the insurer should be asked for clarification.

139. The group leader should ascertain the details of the insurance held by the tour operator.

140. Additional cover may be necessary for participants with medical conditions. The Group Leader should ask the Accounts Manager to check this with the insurance company before departure.

### **Cancellations**

141. Some parents may cancel their child's place in the visit. The group leader should forward any cancellations to the insurer/operator as soon as possible, in writing, if a replacement is not available. Delay in notification may incur cancellation charges.

### **Transport**

142. When hiring coaches etc. the group leader should check that the company used has appropriate insurance.

143. The group leader should ensure that teachers, other adults or pupils using their own cars to carry pupils on school visits, have their vehicle properly licensed and that the insurance covers its use on school business.

## 8. TYPES OF VISIT

### Adventure activities using licensed/commercial Providers

144. When planning to use adventure activity facilities offered by a commercial company the group leader should follow the policy of the school and check:

- whether the provider is legally required to hold a licence for the activities it offers and, if so,
- that the provider actually holds a licence.

### Higher- Risk Activities

145. In the U.K. the following activities - if undertaken by young people under 18 years unaccompanied by a parent - need a licence when commercial companies sell them, or when local authorities provide them with or without a charge. We at BSS refer to them as 'higher-risk' activities:

- **caving:** the exploration of underground passages, disused mines, or natural caves which requires the use of special equipment or expertise;
- **climbing:** climbing, sea-level traversing, abseiling or scrambling over natural terrain or certain man-made structures which requires the use of special rock-climbing or ice-climbing equipment or expertise;
- **trekking:** going on foot, horse (pony), camel, pedal cycle, skis, skates or sledges over moorland, or on ground over 600 metres above sea level when it would take 30 minutes to reach an accessible road or refuge. Off-piste skiing requires a licence;
- **watersports:** this comprises diving, sailing, canoeing, kayaking, rafting and windsurfing, on the sea, tidal waters, inland waters at a location where any part of those waters is more than 50 metres from the nearest land, and turbulent inland waters. Rowing is exempt.

146. Holding a licence means that a provider has been inspected and the Licensing Authority is satisfied that appropriate safety measures are in place for the provision of the specified licensed adventure activities. **However, outside the U.K. such licensing is not mandatory. It is therefore the duty of the Principal or appropriate Headteacher to ascertain the suitability of an establishment prior to the visit taking place. An exploratory visit must be undertaken to satisfy themselves that the centre is suitable for the proposed visit, and they should obtain assurances in writing from the provider that;**

- risks have been assessed and that the provider's staff are competent to instruct and lead pupils of the group's age range on the activity. Competence could be demonstrated by holding the relevant National Governing Body (NGB) award where it exists or through successful participation in an NGB approved in-house scheme;
- the equipment is appropriate and that it's safe condition is checked before each use;

- operating procedures conform to the guidelines of the National Governing Body for the activity where this is appropriate;
- clear management of safety systems is in place;
- there is appropriate provision for first aid;
- clearly defined the roles and responsibilities of its staff;
- the appropriate security arrangements;
- appropriate public liability insurance;
- there are emergency procedures (including arrangements for informing next of kin and for alerting the group leader); that the provider's staff are competent in the procedures and will hold emergency phone numbers and addresses of the group members; and that the group will have a fire drill as soon as possible on arrival at the provider's base.
- transport provided by the centre has one seatbelt per child.

**If any of the above shows a cause for concern a risk assessment should be undertaken by the group leader, and the Head of School should be satisfied that those risks are covered before the visit is to go ahead.**

See **Other issues to consider with all adventure activity providers paragraphs 144 - 146** and **Residential visits paragraphs 169 - 171.**

147. The group leader should ask the provider for names of other schools who have recently used its facilities.

**148. See also Residential visits paragraphs 169 - 171.**

#### **Other issues to consider with all adventure activity providers**

149. The group leader should check and agree with the provider's arrangements for supervision and recreation during the evenings and between adventure activities. The group leader should also provide any relevant information to the provider such as the group's age-range, competence etc.

150. The group leader and teachers retain ultimate responsibility for pupils at all times during adventure activities, even when the group is under instruction by a member of the provider's staff. The provider is responsible for the safe running of an activity. Clear handover and handback procedures should be in place. Everyone, including the pupils, must have an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the school staff and the provider's staff.

151. The group leader and teachers should have sufficient information on what the activity involves before it takes place. They should approach the instructor at an appropriate safe interval if they are concerned that the pupils may be at unnecessary risk.

## **School-led adventure activities**

152. If a member of the school staff is to organise, lead and instruct pupils on adventure activities they should complete the checks set out in this booklet under **Risk assessment** in Chapter 2 paragraphs 32 - 41.

153. The Head of School should satisfy himself that:

- the group leader and other supervisors are competent to act as leaders and/or instructors of pupils in the activity - bearing
- the group leader is competent in safety procedures and the planning of adventurous visits;
- an appropriate risk assessment has been completed;
- the supervision will be appropriate;
- there is adequate first aid provision, expertise and equipment within the group;
- the emergency procedures include activity-specific measures and that supervisors are competent to carry them out;
- the equipment is appropriate, safe and in good condition;
- every pupil is suited to the activity and is properly prepared and equipped.

154. See Form 1 in Chapter 11 which sets out a format for seeking initial approval for a visit.

## **Remote supervision during adventurous activities**

155. Some adventurous activities - such as those under the International Award - require pupils to work in small groups without direct supervision. Particular attention needs to be given to the information provided to pupils before supervision can be withdrawn.

156. The training given to pupils must be sound and thorough and should be assessed separately. The instructor should have the appropriate qualifications or experience to provide training in the activity. The group leader should be satisfied that the pupils have acquired the necessary skills and have the necessary experience, confidence, physical ability and judgement to be left without direct supervision.

157. The withdrawal of direct supervision should be a gradual four stage process:

- accompanying the group;
- shadowing the group;
- checking regularly at agreed locations;

- checking occasionally at agreed locations.

158. Pupils should be familiar with all equipment used or taken without direct supervision and, in addition to training, an initial element of adult supervision in the use of equipment may be required. The condition and suitability of any equipment, particularly safety equipment, taken or used during these activities should be assessed separately.

159. See Chapter 3 **Supervision** and **Preparing pupils for remote supervision** in Chapter 4 paragraphs 87 - 88.

### **Coastal visits**

160. Group leaders and other teachers should be aware that many of the incidents affecting pupils have occurred by or in the sea. There are dangers on the coast quite apart from those incurred in swimming (for which see separate section below). The group leader should bear the following points in mind when assessing the risks of a coastal activity:

- tides, rip tides and sandbanks are potential hazards; timings and exit routes should be checked;
- ensure group members are aware of warning signs and flags, **marine life which may be potentially hazardous**;
- establish a base on the beach to which members of the group may return if separated;
- look out for hazards such as glass, barbed wire, **fishing nets** and sewage outflows etc;
- some of a group's time on a beach may be recreational. Group leaders should consider which areas of the terrain and sea are out of bounds;
- cliff tops can be highly dangerous for school groups even during daylight. The group should keep to the path at all times. Group leaders should consider whether it is safe or legal for pupils to ride mountain bikes on coastal paths.

161. The local coastguards (harbour master / lifeguard / tourist information) can provide information and advice on the nature and location of hazards.

### **Swimming in the sea or other natural waters**

162. Swimming and paddling in the sea or other natural waters are potentially dangerous activities for a school group. They should only be allowed as formal and supervised activities, preferably in recognised bathing areas which have official surveillance i.e. qualified lifeguard cover. Nonetheless, pupils should always be in sight of their supervisors. One supervisor should always stay out of the water for better surveillance.

163. The group leader, or another designated teacher in the group, should hold a relevant lifesaving award, especially where lifeguard cover may not be available. For further advice contact the Royal Life Saving Society.

**164.** At BSS the ratio of **1 adult to 8** pupils is a minimum. The group leader should assess the risks and consider an appropriate safe supervision level for their particular group **before parents give their permission for the activity to take place.**

165. The group leader should:

- be aware that many children who drown are strong swimmers;
- ascertain for themselves the level of the pupil's swimming ability;
- be aware of the local conditions - such as currents, weeds, a shelving, uneven or unstable bottom - using local information from the lifeguard, the local coastguard (harbour master / lifeguard / tourist information);
- designate a safe area of water for use by the group;
- be aware of hazardous marine life;
- be aware of the dangerous effects of sudden immersion in cold water;
- be aware of the dangers of paddling especially for young pupils;
- ensure that pupils have not eaten (at least half an hour) before swimming;
- ensure the activity is suitable for the pupils, especially any with disabilities;
- adopt and explain the signals of distress and recall.

### **Swimming pools**

166. Head teachers will be aware of their local swimming pool facilities for curricular activities. Group leaders should follow the recommended safe supervision levels at the pool for their pupils. A minimum ratio should be;

- **1 adult to 8 pupils in school years 4 to 6;**
- **1 adult to 12 for school years 7 onwards.**
- **for pupils in school year 3 and below the ratio should be higher.**

Teachers should monitor the risks of regular swimming activities and adjust supervision levels for their individual groups as necessary.

167. If considering the use of a swimming pool not used before or monitoring the hazards of a regularly used pool it is advisable to observe and check the following:

- is there constant pool supervision by a sufficient number of qualified lifeguards?

- where there is no lifeguard the group leader should stay at the poolside at a raised location. In such circumstances, the group leader, or a designated teacher, should have a relevant lifesaving award and be accompanied by an appropriate number of supervisors;
- is the water temperature appropriate?
- is the water clear?
- Is there a suitable water treatment and testing regime?
- are there signs clearly indicating the depth - is there a shallow end and is the water there shallow enough?
- does the pool cater for pupils with disabilities?
- does the deep end allow for safe diving?
- is there a poolside telephone?
- are there a resuscitator and other pieces of first-aid and rescue equipment, and is there someone trained to use them?
- is there a changing room for each sex?
- does the pool cater for any particular religious or cultural factors?
- are the changing and showering facilities safe and hygienic?
- can clothes be stored securely?
- have the pupils been instructed how to behave in and around the water?

168. See Model Form 7 for parental consent for swimming activities and Model Form 10 for a checklist on swimming safety, in Chapter 11. Parental consent does not mean that group leaders should not check for themselves the level of a pupil's swimming ability.

### **Farm visits**

169. Farms can be dangerous even for the people who work on them. Taking children to a farm should be carefully planned. The risks to be assessed should include those arising from the misuse of farm machinery and the hazards associated with *E coli 0157* food poisoning and other infections.

170. Check that the farm is well-managed; that it has a good reputation for safety standards and animal welfare; and that it maintains good washing facilities and clean grounds and public areas. Consider the merits of an exploratory visit.

171. There are some basic safety rules. Never let pupils:

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

172. Further advice is contained in the DfES's letter dated 9 June 1997: *Pupil Visits to Farms: Health Precautions* and HSE's *Avoiding ill health at open farms: Advice to teachers*.

### Field studies

173. Field studies associated with a range of subjects including geography, biology, geology and history might take pupils to industrial sites and other urban areas as well as into the countryside and to the coast (see above, **Coastal visits**). The scope of field studies means that the group leaders, who will usually be subject specialists, should also be competent to lead and instruct their pupils within urban and non-urban environments at minimal risk.

### Residential visits

174. The ratio when taking children on residential visits is;

- **1 adult for every 8 pupils in school years 4 to 6;**
- **1 adult for every 10 pupils in school year 7 to 11;**
- **1 adult for every 16 pupils in school years 12 and 13.**

175. Issues for the group leader to consider include the following:

- the group should ideally have adjoining rooms with teachers' quarters next to the pupils' - the leader should obtain a floor plan of the rooms reserved for the group's use in advance;
- there must be at least one teacher from each sex for mixed groups;
- there must be separate male and female sleeping/bathroom facilities for pupils and adults;
- the immediate accommodation area should be exclusively for the group's use;
- ensure there is appropriate and safe heating / air conditioning and ventilation;

- ensure that the whole group are aware of the lay-out of the accommodation, its fire precautions/exits (are instructions in English or otherwise clear?), its regulations and routine, and that everyone can identify key personnel;
- security arrangements - where the reception is not staffed 24 hours a day, security arrangements should be in force to stop unauthorised visitors;
- the manager of the accommodation should be asked for assurances that the staff, including temporary workers, have been checked as suitable for work with young people. See also **Vetting suitability** in Chapter 3 paragraphs 69 - 70;
- locks on doors should work in the group's rooms but appropriate access should be available to teachers at all times;
- there should be drying facilities **if necessary**;
- **if appropriate to the type of visit**, there should be adequate space for storing clothes, luggage, equipment etc., and for the safekeeping of valuables;
- adequate lighting - it is advisable to bring a torch;
- there should be provision for pupils with special needs and those who fall sick;
- balconies should be stable, windows secure, and electrical connections safe;
- where possible pupils should not be lodged in ground floor rooms;
- the fire alarm must be audible throughout the accommodation;
- there should be recreational accommodation/ facilities for the group;
- the hotel/hostel should be able to meet any particular cultural or religious needs of the group;
- there should be an appropriate number of group supervisors on standby duty during the night.

176. Before booking a hostel/hotel abroad, the group leader should confirm it has fire exits and lifts with inner doors and that it meets local regulations. After arrival at any accommodation it is advisable to carry out a fire drill orientation as soon as possible.

## 9. VISITS ABROAD

### General

177. Travelling abroad can be hugely rewarding for pupils and adults alike, but it is important that careful preparation takes place. Much of the earlier information in this policy applies to visits abroad, but there are some additional factors that need to be considered. **The group leader should always comply with the school policy on visits abroad.** School visits abroad can be made in a number of ways.

### Organising your own visit

178. The Head of School or group leader may decide to organise a package abroad without the help of an outside body. Package organisers in the U.K. have responsibilities under Directive 90/314/EEC. **However, in Oman there are no directives which govern commercial package organisers. The Principal must be satisfied that the company to be used is a reputable one.**

### Organising your own transport

179. Group leaders should ensure that drivers taking groups abroad are familiar with driving the coach or minibus in the countries being visited and those en route. EC regulations require the fitment and use of a tachograph and prescribe maximum limits on driving time and minimum requirements for breaks and rest periods. These regulations apply for most drivers of school passenger vehicles when undertaking an international journey. Different licence requirements would normally apply for driving in non-EU countries. DETR can provide advice on the relevant transport legislation.

180. Factors to consider when travelling abroad include:

- the need to be aware that different legislation and regulations may apply for drivers' hours and record-keeping purposes, particularly in non-EU countries;
- EU drivers' hours and tachograph regulations normally apply to any vehicle with 9 or more passenger seats on journeys through EU countries and some countries outside the EU. In other countries, drivers must observe the domestic rules of the countries being visited. Advice on domestic rules may be obtained from the relevant embassies of the countries concerned.
- all group members should be aware of unfamiliar left-hand drive traffic;
- carrying capacity and loading requirements;
- DETR can provide information on legal requirements for travel abroad.

### Using a Tour Operator

181. Before using a tour operator, group leaders should ensure it is reputable. Ascertaining this should form part of the risk assessment. The Civil Aviation Authority licences travel organisers

and tour operators selling air seats or packages with an air transport element (Air Travel Organisers Licence or ATOL). The licence is a legal requirement and provides security against a licence holder going out of business.

182. A travel agent does not need to be an ATOL holder if acting only as an agent of an ATOL holder. But if so the group leader must check whether or not the whole package being supplied is covered by the ATOL. If it is not, the organiser must show evidence of other forms of security to provide for the refund of advance payments and the costs of repatriation in the event of insolvency.

183. There are seven bonding bodies approved by the Department of Trade and Industry (U.K.). In addition the International Air Transport Association (IATA) provides a worldwide standard for travel agents:

- Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA)
- Federation of Tour Operators Trust (FTOT)
- Association of Independent Tour Operators Trust (AITOT)
- Passenger Shipping Association (PSA)
- The Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT)
- Yacht Charter Association (YCA)
- The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust (ABTOT)

### **Operators based abroad**

184. Directive 90/314/EEC (as referred to above) applies to all states of the European Economic Area (EEA). Group leaders may wish to use a package organiser based in an EEA state. If so, they should check that it satisfies the requirements of the national legislation implementing the Directive. Details may be available from national tourist offices or embassies/consulates.

### **Sources of further advice for school travel abroad**

185. The following sources are able to provide further advice::

- The Department of Trade and Industry (UK) - for the regulations governing tour operators;
- The Schools and Group Travel Association (SAGTA) is an independent association with a members' code of good conduct and safety rules. All its members are in ABTA;
- Alternatively, there are voluntary bodies established to promote school journeys, such as the School Journey Association;

- Head teachers or group leaders who decide to arrange travel independently may also seek the advice and help of the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) Travel Advice Unit. The Unit's purpose is to help intending travellers to avoid trouble abroad. It can provide information on threats to personal safety arising from political unrest, lawlessness, violence etc.

## Planning and preparation

186. It is good practice that an exploratory visit to the location should always be made. If this is not possible, the group leader should gather as much information as possible on the area to be visited/facilities from:

- the provider;
- the UK Foreign & Commonwealth Office's Travel Advice Unit;
- other schools who have used the facilities/been to the area;
- national travel offices in the UK;
- embassies/consulates;
- travel agents/tour operators;
- The Suzy Lamplugh Trust, a national charity for personal safety, who have produced guidance, including a book called *World Wise: Your Passport to Safer Travel*, a video of the same title, and information on the Internet. See Annexes A and B for publication details and contact addresses;
- the Internet, books and magazines.

## Staffing the visit

187. Staffing ratios for visits abroad are difficult to prescribe as they will vary according to the activity, the pupils' age and sex, the location, and the efficient use of resources. A minimum ratio of 1 adult to 10 pupils (see paragraph 169) is a general rule of thumb but at least two of the adults should be teachers. There should be enough adults in the group to cover an emergency. Mixed gender groups should have at least one male teacher and one female teacher.

## Preparing pupils for visits abroad

188. Factors to consider for visits abroad include:

- language - particularly common phrases;

- culture e.g. body language, rules and regulations of behaviour, dress codes, local customs, attitudes to gender etc;
- drugs, alcohol-usage;
- food and drink - group members should be warned of the dangers of drinking tap water in certain countries. In some countries it is safer to drink bottled water, and care needs to be taken with raw vegetables, salads and unpeeled fruit, raw shellfish, underdone meat or fish;
- money - how to carry money and valuables discreetly e.g. money belts, zip armlets. If larger amounts of money will be needed, it is advisable to take travellers cheques;
- how to use phones abroad, money required and the code for phoning home;
- what to do in an emergency. See **Emergencies** in this chapter, paragraphs 199 - 202, and Chapter 10 **Emergency Procedures**.

### **Briefing meeting for parents**

189. It is particularly important that parents are given the opportunity to meet the teachers and others who will be taking the pupils overseas. See Chapter 5 **Communicating with Parents**.

### **Vaccinations**

190. The **School Nurse at BSM** should find out whether vaccination is necessary and ensure that all members of the group have received it in good time. Check whether the country to be visited requires proof of vaccination. The Department of Health (U.K.) gives advice on vaccination requirements in their publication, *Health Advice to Travellers Anywhere in the World*.

### **Insurance**

191. The group leader must liaise with the Accounts Manager to ensure that the group has comprehensive travel insurance. See also Chapter 7 **Insurance**.

### **Foreign legislation**

192. The group leader needs to check relevant legislation; particularly on health and safety e.g. fire regulations.

### **Language abilities**

193. One of the adults with the group should be able to speak and read the language of the visited country. If not, the leader or another adult learns enough of the language to hold a basic conversation and knows what to say in an emergency. It is also advisable that pupils have a basic knowledge of the local language before the visit.

## **Visas/passports**

194. The group leader should ensure that all members of the group have valid passports and visas (if appropriate) in the early stages of planning the trip.
195. Photocopies of the group's passports should be taken for emergency use. Otherwise there can be problems if someone other than the designated leader has to accompany an injured pupil back to Oman.

## **Nationality**

196. The group leader should ensure well in advance, that all pupils, regardless of nationality will be able to leave and re-enter Oman and the country/ies to be visited.

## **Emergency Medical Facilities**

197. The group leader must be clear on the terms of medical insurance with regards to emergency medical treatment. A contingency fund should be taken as sometimes treatment must be paid for in advance and money has to be claimed back later.

## **Paperwork**

198. The group leader should ensure that they obtain and take with them:
- travel tickets, passports, visas and residence cards (where applicable). It is also advisable to carry a separate list of the numbers of any travel documents/passports, and photocopies of all the group's documents in a sealed waterproof bag;
  - a copy of the contract with the centre/hotel etc., if appropriate;
  - medical papers e.g. medical insurance documents and significant medical histories;
  - parental consent forms and permission for group leader to authorise emergency treatment on parental behalf;
  - the phone numbers and addresses, at home and in school, of the head teacher and of the school contact;
  - the names of parents and the addresses and telephone numbers at which they can be contacted (home and workplace);
  - copies of a list of group members and their details;
  - details of insurance arrangements and the company's telephone number;
  - the name, address and telephone number of the group's accommodation;
  - location of local hospital/medical services;

- location and 'phone numbers of British Embassy or Consulate;
- passport sized photographs of the pupils and of the adults in the group.

### **Information retained at the school**

199. Full details of the visit should be retained at school by the main office secretary while the visit is in progress. This should include:

- the itinerary and contact telephone number/address of the group;
- a list of group members and their details;
- contact names, addresses, telephone numbers of the parents and next of kin of all members of the party, staff and pupils;
- copies of parental consent forms;
- copies of travel documents, insurance documents, medical papers;
- a copy of the contract with the centre/hotel etc., if appropriate.

200. It is the Head of School's responsibility to ensure this information is available at all times. This is particularly important if the visit takes place when the school is closed.

### **During the visit**

201. Pupils should carry a note in the relevant foreign language for use if they get lost, asking the reader to reunite them with the group at the accommodation/meeting point, or to take them to the police station. They should also carry the group leader's name and the duty contact's phone number.

202. All group members should carry an appropriate amount of foreign currency at all times e.g. money for telephone (or a phone card).

203. It is important to be able to identify group members readily e.g. uniform, brightly coloured back-pack, cap or item of clothing, badges. However, no student should display their name clearly on their clothing - this could result in their being isolated from the group by an apparently friendly, personal call.

### **Emergencies**

204. The group leader must ensure that all members of the group know what action to take if there is a problem.

205. The group leader and supervisors should know where the nearest British Embassy or Consulate is located and the telephone number. Depending on the age of the pupils, it may be appropriate to ensure that they have this information to hand. The group leader should also let the Consular section of the British Embassy in the Country to which the trip is travelling have a list of British and Commonwealth students taking part. The group leader should also check with the Embassies of non-British and Commonwealth nationals as to their advice.

206. Group leaders need to be aware that some diseases are more prevalent in some countries than in others and should know what action to take should a member of the group become infected.

207. Many of the health problems of pupils on longer visits are caused by lack of food, of liquid or of sleep. The group leader should take this into account at the planning stage and take measures to prevent these risks. If appropriate, parents should be asked to provide suitably factored sun protection creams and sun hats/glasses. Group members should be advised about the dangers of overexertion in the heat and of dehydration, which can cause headache, dizziness and nausea. In warm climates it is important to keep fluid levels high, take extra salt and wear loose, lightweight clothing - preferably made of cotton or other natural fibres.

### **Contacts at home**

208. It is advisable to have a teacher/contact in Oman with a valid passport, able to go to the area being visited to provide support to the group in the event of an emergency.

### **Travel by air**

209. Taking a school group on an aircraft requires careful planning and preparation. The airline/travel agent will be able to advise on particular requirements. If the group includes any members with disabilities, it is advisable to check that the airline has a wheelchair service and lifting facility etc., if appropriate. The group leader should resist any attempt by the airline to split the group between different aircraft.

### **Exchange visits**

210. The success of an exchange visit largely depends on good relationships and communications with the partner school.

211. Individual school exchanges differ from other visits abroad in that pupils will spend most of their time with host families and are, therefore, not always under the direct supervision of school staff. These families will only be subject to local law.

212. Pupils must be aware of the ground rules agreed between the group leader and the host family. Many of the considerations which apply to residential and day trips also apply here. In addition, the following should be ensured by the group leader:

- a good personal knowledge of the host school and counterpart;

- satisfactory 'pairing' arrangements. The partner school should tell the host families of any special, medical or dietary needs of their guests, age and gender;
- matches should be appropriate;
- parents, pupils and the host school should be clear about the arrangements for collecting and distributing pupils to families, and for transporting pupils throughout the visit;
- the Principal should retain a list of all the children involved and their family names and addresses;
- pupils living with host families should have easy access to their teachers, usually by telephone;
- parents should be made aware that their children living with host families will not always be under direct teacher-supervision.

### **Vetting host families**

213. Exchange or home stay visits can be arranged through agencies, in which case the agency should have some responsibility for vetting the host families. Group leaders making their own arrangements need to be clear about procedures in the relevant country for vetting the suitability of host families including criminal background checks insofar as these are available.

214. If the host school or placement agency does not have appropriate measures in place for carrying out checks to ensure the health, safety and welfare of exchange or home stay pupils, the group leader should seek further assurances and/or reconsider whether the visit should take place.

## 10. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

### General

215. Teachers in charge of pupils during a visit have a duty of care to make sure that the pupils are safe and healthy. They also have a common law duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would. Teachers should not hesitate to act in an emergency and to take life-saving action in an extreme situation.
216. Emergency procedures are an essential part of planning a school visit.
217. If an accident happens, the priorities are to:
- assess the situation;
  - safeguard the uninjured members of the group;
  - attend to the casualty, inform the emergency services and everyone who needs to know of the incident.

### Who will take charge in an emergency?

218. **The group leader** would usually take charge in an emergency and would need to ensure that emergency procedures are in place and that back up cover is arranged. The group leader should liaise with the representative of the tour operator if one is being used.
219. **Pre-arranged school home contact.** The school contact's main responsibility is to link the group with the school, the parents and to provide assistance as necessary. The named person should have all the necessary information about the visit. See Form 9 in Chapter 11 for a suggested checklist for the named person.

### Emergency procedures framework (See page 57 )

220. All those involved in the school trip, including supervisors, pupils and their parents, should be informed of who will take charge in an emergency, the named back up cover and what they are expected to do in an emergency. The *Emergency Procedures Framework* for medical emergencies can be seen at the end of this chapter. In addition an aide memoire for incident handling is also attached.

### Emergency procedures framework during the visit

221. If an emergency occurs on a school visit the main factors to consider include:
- establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible;
  - ensure that all the group are safe and looked after;
  - establish the names of any casualties and get immediate medical attention for them;

- ensure that all group members who need to know are aware of the incident and that all group members are following the emergency procedures;
- ensure that a teacher accompanies casualties to hospital and that the rest of the group are adequately supervised at all times and kept together;
- notify the police, British Embassy/Consulate if necessary;
- inform the school contact. The school contact number should be accessible at all times during the visit. Details of the incident to pass on to the school should include: nature, date and time of incident, location of incident, names of casualties and details of their injuries, names of others involved so that parents can be reassured; action taken so far; action yet to be taken (and by whom);
- notify insurers, especially if medical assistance is required (this may be done by the school contact);
- notify the provider/tour operator (this may be done by the school contact);
- ascertain telephone numbers for future calls. Mobile phones, though useful, are subject to technical difficulties, and should not replace usual communication procedures;
- write down accurately and as soon as possible all relevant facts and witness details and preserve any vital evidence;
- keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident;
- complete an accident report form as soon as possible;
- no-one in the group should speak 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 Principal;
- no-one in the group should discuss legal liability with other parties.

### **Emergency procedures framework for school base**

222. Prior to the visit, the name and home telephone numbers of a school contact should be identified. It is advisable to arrange a second school contact as a reserve. Head teachers and group leader should bear in mind that the contact lines may become busy in the event of an incident and that alternative numbers to ring would be useful.

223. The main factors for the school contact to consider include:

- ensuring that the group leader is in control of the emergency and establishing if any assistance is required from the school base;
- contacting parents. Details of parents' contact numbers need to be available at all times while the group is on the visit. The school contact should act as a link between the group

and parents. Parents should be kept as well informed as possible at all stages of the emergency;

- liaison with the Board of Governors. The school contact should act as a link between the group and Head of School and arrange for the group to receive assistance, if necessary. The Head of School should act as a link to the chair of governors;
- liaison with media contact. If a serious incident occurs, the school contact should liaise with the designated media contact (Head of School) as soon as possible;
- the reporting of the incident using appropriate forms, if necessary.

### **Media contact**

224. The media contact (Head of School) should liaise with the school contact, the group leader and, where appropriate, the emergency services. In the event of an emergency all media enquiries should be referred to the media contact. The name of any casualty should not be given to the media.

### **After a serious incident**

225. It is not always possible to assess whether group members not injured or directly involved in the incident have been traumatised or whether other pupils or staff in the school have been affected. In some cases reactions do not surface immediately. The school in this situation should seek professional advice on how to help individuals and the school as a whole cope with the effects of a tragedy.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES FRAMEWORK

This page charts the stages of action to take in the event of an emergency

First Aider to establish the nature of the injury as quickly as possible,  
Remaining children to be supervised by other adult staff in a safe place away from the injured person.



First Aider to decide upon course of action either:  
a. treat 'on the spot'  
b. transport to the nearest hospital (first aider to travel with injured person another adult to accompany/drive)  
Remaining children to be supervised by other adult staff in a safe place away from the injured person.  
Group organiser to notify the police if necessary



Group organiser to notify parents if hospital treatment required  
Group organiser to notify the school and 'tour' organiser  
School notifies the insurers if medical assistance required  
If no hospital treatment required First Aider to monitor condition. If stable, continue with visit, if concerned, parents to collect



Group organiser to pass on details of the incident to the school. These should include: nature, date and time of the incident; location of incident; names of casualties and details of their injuries; names of others involved so that parents can be reassured; action taken so far; action yet to be taken and by whom



Should a child need to return to school this will be done by ambulance or four wheel drive if necessary, or parents will come to collect them.

## INCIDENT MANAGEMENT

1. In the event that an incident occurs involving a pupil or member of staff on a School trip please follow the guidelines below:
  - 1.1. Carry out immediate action, as required, to deal with the incident.
  - 1.2. Report the incident to the School, normally the Head of School, if there are repercussions that need managing i.e. involvement of the local authorities, student being returned to home, threat to security, etc.
  - 1.3. The following details are required as they become available:
    - a. Date
    - b. Time
    - c. Location
    - d. Those involved
    - e. Nature of the incident
    - f. Action taken so far
    - g. Who has already been informed?
    - h. What else needs to be done?
    - i. Final outcome if known.
  - 1.4. Stay in regular contact with the School until such time as the incident has been satisfactorily concluded. *Ensure that a responsible, informed adult member of the group is available by telephone for the complete duration of the incident.*
2. Media.
  - 2.1. Refer all media queries to the Head of School.
  - 2.2. Do not allow any of the group to comment or make any comment yourself.
3. Communication.
  - 3.1. Ensure that all communications are previewed and/or routed through the group leader.
  - 3.2. Brief all participants about the dangers of spreading rumours or unsubstantiated speculation.
  - 3.3. Stick to the facts in all reporting.
  - 3.4. Ensure that GSM discipline is adhered to.

#### 4. Dealing with authorities.

- 4.1. If the incident involves the local authorities of the host country remain polite and cooperative at all times.
- 4.2. If the incident occurs within Oman contact the School Interpreter for assistance as soon as possible. Fahad Baker - 99365618 (based in Muscat)
- 4.3. If the incident occurs outside of Oman ensure that the British Embassy is informed as soon as possible and get them to either inform any other embassies as required or provide the necessary contact details for the group leader to do so.

#### 5. Post incident report.

- 5.1. When an incident occurs nominate one responsible adult to maintain a log of all actions being taken including timings, those involved, phone calls etc.
- 5.2. Prepare a written report as soon as possible after the event to ensure that all the details are recorded accurately in case of any future follow up. Structure the report using the sub headings in paragraph 1.3
- 5.3. Add a final paragraph detailing 'lessons learnt' to prevent a recurrence where possible.

## CHAPTER 11 - FORMS

Link [here](#) to forms

Form 1	Initial Application for Approval by the Principal of Short / Residential Visit
Form 2A	Detailed Proposal for Residential Visit
Form 2B	Detailed Proposal for Short Visit
Form 3	Risk Assessment
Form 4	Evaluation of the Visit
Form 5	Checklist for Pupils going on a Residential Visit
Form 6A	Parental Consent for a School Visit
Form 6B	Parental Consent for a school Residential Visit
Form 7	Consent Form for Swimming Activities or Activities where being able to swim is Essential
Form 8	Emergency Contact List
Form 9	Emergency Contact Information (to be held by the School Contact)
Form 10	Off-site Swimming Pool Checklist
Form 11	To be added to School trip letters
Form 12	Coach Booking form