

# HURST GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL



## Educational Visits Policy

Policy for the attention of			
Audience	Key Audience	Optional Audience	Additional/Notes
Senior Leadership Team	√		
Teachers	√		
Teaching Assistants	√		
Administrative Staff	√		
Lunchtime Supervisors		√	
Site Manager		√	
Cleaners		√	
Governors	√		
Parents	√		
Website	√		
Local Authority		√	

Responsibility of	School Improvement Committee
Review frequency	Annually
Created	February 2019
Previous versions	4 February 2019; 3 February 2020; 22 February 2021; 7 February 2022; 6 February 2023
This version agreed	17 March 2025
Next review date	Spring 2026

## **1 Introduction**

Learning outdoors is an important part of every young person's development in the broadest sense. It encourages children and young people to take responsibility for their own learning, actions, and interactions with the environment. By engaging with the outdoors, they return stimulated, enthused, and with a greater awareness of their own abilities, while also developing a deeper understanding of and **responsibility** toward the environment they live in.

Underpinning this policy is a comprehensive web based resource system "Evolve" - (EVOLVE *visits* is an essential tool for planning and managing educational visits, on-site activities, after school clubs and sports fixtures). This innovative and market leading system will be continually edited and upgraded thus eliminating the need for printing and bulky documentation.

It is essential that qualified competent staff can lead and undertake these activities and experiences safely carefully weighing up the benefits against the risks.

### **Executive summary from Ofsted**

Learning inside a classroom is a tried and tested method of organising schooling. However, teachers and learners have always valued the additional opportunities for learning provided by a range of activities conducted outside the classroom. These include day and residential visits, field studies, investigations conducted in the local area, sporting events, and music and drama productions. In organising such activities, schools and colleges have often drawn on the services of a range of providers, including commercially run outdoor education and sport centres, as well as the education departments of museums, art galleries, theatres and concert halls. Recently, the Government has placed increased emphasis on such activities with the publication of the Learning outside the classroom manifesto and the training and guidance associated with it.

## **2 Policy and Guidance for Educational Visits and Learning Outside the Classroom**

### **1. Provision of Employer Guidance**

Hurst Green Primary school- under the advice of Dudley MBC- has formally adopted '**The Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP)**. This body provides guidance, activities, training and support for outdoor learning and educational visits.

<https://oeapng.info/guidance-documents/>

***Anybody involved in educational visits and learning outside the classroom is strongly advised to read this policy before seeking information from the OEAP website.***

It is a legal expectation that employees **must** work within the requirements of their employer's policy and guidance. Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council employees must follow the requirements of 'Outdoor Education Advisers Panel National Guidance', as well as the requirements of this document.

### **3 Scope and Remit**

The OEAP National Guidance document: 1c “**Status and Remit and Rationale**” clarifies the range of employees whose work requires them to use the guidance. In summary, it applies to employees whose work involves any one of the following:

- Direct supervision of children and young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal classroom or environment.
- Direct supervision of children and young people undertaking experiences that fall within the remit of learning outside the classroom.
- Facilitating experiences for children and young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal classroom or environment.
- Deploying staff who will supervise or facilitate experiences for children and young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal environment.
- this guidance may be applicable for all those supervising vulnerable adults as there is a transfer of good practice for the wider use of educational visits.

This applies regardless of whether or not the activities take place within or outside of normal working hours, including weekends and holiday periods.

For a more expansive explanation of legal expectations, all users of the guidance are strongly recommended to read the OEAP National Guidance document: 3.2a “**Underpinning Legal Framework and Duty of Care**”.

### **4 Assessment of Leader Competence and Good Practice Requirements**

OEAP National Guidance provides clear advice regarding the assessment of leader competence. It is an expectation of the Council Policy and Guidance that all leaders and their assistants have been classed as competent to undertake the responsibilities of leading the educational visit or learning outside the classroom activity by the senior leadership team / Educational Visits co-ordinator.

Refer to OEAP National Guidance document: 3.2d/4.4a “**Assessment of Competence**” .

To be deemed competent, a Visit / Activity Leader, or Assistant Leader must be able to demonstrate *the ability to operate to the current standards of recognised good practice for that role*.

All staff and helpers must be competent to carry out their defined roles and responsibilities.

OEAP National Guidance sets a clear standard to which leaders **must** work.

Staff participating in educational visits and learning outside the classroom activities must be aware of the extent of their duty of care and should only be given such responsibilities as are in keeping with the above guidance. It is particularly important

that careful consideration of competence issues is applied to both newly qualified and newly appointed staff.

For example- NQTs should not lead a trip if it is their first as a newly qualified teacher.

Where a volunteer helper is a parent (or otherwise in a close relationship to a young person taking part in the visit), they should be made aware of the potential for their relationship to compromise the Visit Leader's plans for group management. The Visit Leader should directly address this issue as part of the Risk-Benefit assessment.

This being the case, the EVC and head teacher should therefore consider the following when assessing the competence of a member of staff to lead a visit:

- What is the leader's reason for undertaking the visit?
- Is the leader an employee?
- Has the leader a real sense of responsibility, extending beyond the teaching of the subject to concern for the participants well-being?
- Does the leader possess the necessary organising ability?
- Is the leader competent in risk assessment and risk management?
- What experience has the leader of the participants he/she intends to lead?
- What experience has the leader in leading, or assisting in the leading of similar visits or activities?
- What experience has the leader of the environment and geographical area chosen?
- Does the leader possess appropriate qualifications?
- If appropriate, what is the leader's personal level of skill in the activity, and fitness level?
- All supervisory staff must remain vigilant and carry out ongoing dynamic risk assessment throughout the duration of every trip.
- Plan B – if your first option isn't available, you must always have an appropriate second option available.

Refer to OEAP National Guidance document: 4.3a ***“Good Practice Basics”*** .

## ***5 Preliminary Visits and Provider Assurances***

All educational visits and learning outside the classroom activities should be thoroughly researched to establish the suitability of the venue and to check that facilities and third-party provision will meet group needs and expectations. Such information gathering is essential in assessing the requirements for effective supervision of young people. It is a vital dimension of risk management.

For any new educational visit, a preliminary visit is strongly advised. Wherever reasonably practicable, it is good practice to carry out a preliminary visit on sites that have already been visited.

### **Adventure activities using licensed providers**

For further information, all users of the guidance are recommended to read the OEAP document ***“Adventurous Activities”***.

**Holding a licence means that a provider has been inspected, and the licensing authority are satisfied that appropriate safety measures are in place for the provision of the specified licensed adventure activities. Other elements of the provision – such as catering and accommodation are not covered by the licensing scheme. These should be checked separately by the Visit Leader.**

### **Adventure activities using non-licensed providers**

- Risks have been assessed and that the provider's staff that are competent to instruct and lead young people of the group's age range on the activity. Competence could be demonstrated by holding the relevant NGB (National Governing Bodies) award where it exists or through successful participation in an NGB approved in-house scheme.
- The equipment is appropriate and that its 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.
- There are emergency procedures (including arrangements for informing next of kin and for alerting the Visit 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.

The Visit Leader may wish to ask the provider for names of other schools/centres who have recently used its facilities.

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

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

The Visit Leader and staff retain ultimate responsibility for young people 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 young people, must have an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the school/centre staff and the provider's staff.

The Visit Leader and other staff 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 young people may be at unnecessary risk. Assurances may be sought that the provider has:

- Checked the suitability of the staff, including temporary workers, to work with young people.
- Clearly defined the roles and responsibilities of its staff.
- Made appropriate security arrangements.
- Obtained appropriate public liability insurance.

## **6 Vetting and DBS Checks**

### **Volunteers in the Council / Schools**

The advice states those who work *frequently* or *intensively* with, or have *regular access* to young people or vulnerable adults, must undergo an enhanced DBS check as part of their recruitment process.

#### **For the purposes of this guidance:**

- *frequently* is defined as "once a week or more";
- *intensively* is defined as 4 days or more in a month or overnight.

However, it must be clearly understood that a DBS check (or other vetting procedure) in itself, is no guarantee as to the suitability of an adult to work with any given group of young or vulnerable people. The placement of an adult within a situation of professional trust (where young people could be vulnerable to physical or mental exploitation or grooming) should always be on the understanding that an overview based on a common sense risk-benefit assessment process has been considered. Where a Volunteer Helper is a parent (or otherwise in a close relationship to a young person taking part in the visit) they should be made aware of the potential for their relationship to compromise the Visit Leader's plans for group management. The Visit Leader should directly address this issue as part of the Risk-Benefit assessment.

Refer to Dudley MBC policy and OEAP National Guidance document: 3.2g "**Vetting Disclosure and Barring Service**

## **7 Insurance for Educational Visits and Off-Site Activities.**

The school office and leader will ensure that the correct amount of insurance is put in place for all of site visits.

## **8 Risk Management**

The employer has a legal duty to ensure that risks are managed - requiring them to be reduced to an "acceptable" or "tolerable" level. This requires that suitable and sufficient risk management systems are in place, requiring the employer to provide such support, training and resources to its employees as is necessary to implement this policy.

The risk management of an activity should be informed by the benefits to be gained from participating. The Council strongly recommends a "Risk-Benefit Assessment" approach, whereby the starting point for any risk assessment should be a consideration of the targeted benefits and learning outcomes. HSE (health and safety executive) endorse this approach through their "**Principles of Sensible Risk**

**Management”** and advocate that it is important that young people are exposed to well-managed risks so that they learn how to manage risk for themselves.

There is a requirement for the risk assessment process to be recorded and for suitable and sufficient control measures to be identified for any significant risks i.e. those that may cause serious harm to individuals. This is done by visit leaders through Evolve. Educational visit Training ensures staff are aware of the need to electronically record risk assessment.

Hurst Green have adopted and adapted these materials to ease the burden of bureaucracy that might otherwise discourage leaders from making full use of learning outside the classroom learning opportunities. When planning visits, staff use the following acronym:

- The **s**taff
- The **a**ctivity
- The **g**roup
- The **e**nvironment
- The **d**istance (Transport)

Refer to OEAP National Guidance document: 4.3c **“Risk Management”**.

Here at Hurst Green, all offsite visits which are not covered by the councils VJE form(Local Area Visits) will require staff to complete a clear and concise risk assessment via Evolve. However, there is no legal or **Dudley MBC** requirement to produce a risk assessment in a particular format; but there is a requirement for the process to be recorded and for suitable and sufficient control measures to be identified for any significant risks i.e. those that may cause serious harm to an individual, or harm several people.

**Specific approval from the Dudley MBC Offsite Visits Team is required for the following activities:**

- Residential visits
- Overseas visits (including expeditions)
- Adventurous activities (see definition below)
- Beach trips - activity/trips in close proximity to open water
- Other visits where the level of risk is similar to the visits listed above.

Any visit risk assessment form will be processed by the Education Visits Coordinator (A. South) and given final approval by the Headteacher (K Wilson).

### **9 Adventurous activities**

The following visits are regarded as adventurous and therefore do require Dudley MBC Offsite Visits Team approval. These activities must be supervised by a member of staff who has previous relevant experience and/or who has been assessed.

Staff should contact the EVC or Evolve support directly if they are unsure if this definition applies.

- Swimming (all forms except publicly life guarded pools)
- Camping
- Canoeing / kayaking / rafting / improvised rafting
- All other forms of boating
- Rock climbing(outdoor) and related mountaineering activities River/gorge walking or scrambling
- Underground exploration
- Off-site mountain biking and lowland trail riding
- Road cycling (except as part of a 'Bikeability', cycling proficiency or similar programme)
- Horse riding
- Quad bikes, off-road buggies
- High level ropes courses
- 'Extreme' sports
- Water based activities
- Any other activities involving skills inherent in any of the above or that may contain a similar level of risk to participants or staff.
- Beach activity/trips in close proximity to open water
- Ice rink skating
- Orienteering
- All activities in 'open country' – any activity (hill walking, mountaineering, fieldwork, biking etc.) on moorland (open uncultivated land) at any height or mountainous ground over 600 metres above sea level or at any height where it would take 30 minutes to reach an accessible road or refuge.

**Approval for the above will only be given online via EVOLVE.**

Once a trip has been approved by the EVC and head, all staff who are taking part on the trip -including volunteers- must sign the school pro forma to confirm they have read the risk assessment and are happy with its contents.

The following visits are not regarded as adventurous and therefore do not require **Dudley MBC Offsite Visits Team** approval. These activities must however be



supervised by a member of staff who has previous relevant experience and/or who has been assessed by the EVC or head teacher/ service manager as competent to supervise the activity:

- Walking in parks or non-remote country paths
- Field studies (unless in the environments defined as adventurous)
- Swimming in publicly life guarded pools
- Theme parks (e.g. Alton Towers, Adventure Valley etc.)
- Tourist attractions
- Pedal go-carts
- Motorised go-karts at commercial venues
- Archery clubs
- Indoor rock climbing/bouldering provided by a leisure centre or similar commercial venue
- Farm visits
- Local traffic surveys
- Museums, libraries etc.
- Physical education and sports fixtures
- Water margin activities – such as walking along a riverbank or stream, collecting samples from streams & ponds, or paddling in gentle shallow (up to the knees) water. If the activity exceeds this definition the activity is water based and therefore adventurous.

### **10 Local Area Visits**

Visits/activities within the 'Local Learning Area' that are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the normal school day follow the Operating Procedure below.

These involve no more than an everyday level of risk, such as slips and trips and are covered by a school's current policies and procedures. They only need a little extra planning beyond the educational aspect of the trip. They can be considered as lessons in a different classroom.

### **Boundaries**

These visits/activities:

- Must be recorded on EVOLVE via the 'Local Area Visit' module.
- Do not require parental consent (excluding swimming).
- Do not normally need additional assessments / notes (other than following the Operating Procedure below).

The boundaries of the Local Learning Area are shown on the attached map. This area includes, but is not limited to, the following frequently used venues:

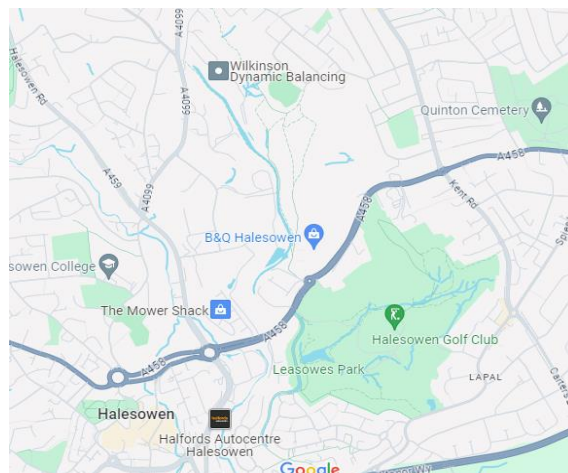
- Hurst Green Park

- Local High schools including Olive Hill, Perryfields Academy, Leasowes High School, The Earls High School and Windsor High School and Sixth Form
- Long Lane Library
- Local retirement homes
- Halesowen Town Centre

### **‘No-go’ areas within the Boundaries**

- Retail/industrial venues such as B and Q
- Rowley Regis Train Station
- Religious venues (We will ask for specific parental permission before taking children to a religious venue)

Some local visits will require children to travel on a coach or minibus for a short period of time to a local setting. An example of this would be a sporting event at a local high school or weekly swimming sessions.



### **Operating Procedure for Local Learning Area**

The below is simply a generic risk assessment for these routine activities

**The following are potentially significant issues/hazards within our Local Learning Area:**

- Road traffic.
- Other people- members of the public/ animals.
- Losing a pupil.
- Medical issues
- Uneven surfaces and slips, trips, and falls.
- Weather conditions.

- Activity specific issues when doing fieldwork (nettles, brambles, rubbish, etc).
- Transport to venues

**These are managed by a combination of the following:**

### **General**

- The Head must give verbal approval before a group leaves the premises.
- Only staff judged competent to supervise groups in this environment are approved. A current list of approved staff is maintained by the EVC.
- The concept and Operating Procedure of the 'Local Learning Area' is communicated to new parents when their child joins the school, and the policy is displayed on the school website.
- Students are briefed on keeping their distance from members of the public.
- The selected route takes the least busy option.
- There must be a minimum of two adults.
- Staff are familiar with the area, including any 'no-go' areas, and have practised appropriate group management techniques.
- Staff will record the activity on EVOLVE (Local Area Visit module).
- Staff will inform parents but may not ask for consent.
- A mobile is taken with each group and the office have a note of the number.

### **Road Traffic**

- Pupils have been trained and have practised standard techniques for road crossings in a group.
- When walking around the local area, high Visibility Jackets must be worn by both staff and children.
- Staff must have pre-planned and checked routes whilst establishing the most suitable places for the group to cross the road.

### **Procedure for Walking**

- The maximum amount of high visibility jackets are to be worn by both children and adults. Children are to be encouraged to keep up with group

(slower children can be put to the front) Lead staff will periodically stop the group to ensure all children are caught up. Children will be spoken to about keeping together before the walk. Staff should be spread and not grouped (especially at the back of the line).

- Staff are to be vigilant at all times.
- Staff should be mindful of the group and actively manage of children's behaviour and pace.
- All crossing staff must wear high visibility jackets and seek to stand in a visible place on the road to ensure that they keep both the children, and the adult are safe.

### **Other People**

- Staff are to be vigilant around members of the public.
- Staff are to remind pupils to keep their hands away from dogs that are out walking.

### **Loss of a pupil**

- Where appropriate, pupils are fully briefed on what to do if they become separated from the group.
- Head counts are to be performed when leaving any site and upon arrival back at Hurst Green.
- Staff are to perform regular head counts during the activity.
- If a pupil needs to leave the main group (e.g. toilet), then a member of staff must accompany the child and wait outside the toilet before returning them to the main group

### **Medical/ Behaviour**

- Staff are aware of any relevant pupil medical information and ensure that any required medication is available.
- First aid kits, emergency inhalers and appropriate personal protective equipment is taken when needed (e.g. gloves, first aid, tissues etc).
- Children- in Years 4, 5 & 6 will be responsible for carrying their own inhalers- unless that is unsuitable for the individual- however Epi-pens MUST be carried by the teacher irrespective of age.
- The group or venue must have a member of staff who is first aid trained.
- Individual risk assessments must still be used for children with medical and behaviour needs. The school's Educational Visits Co-ordinator will facilitate the production of individual behaviour plans.

## **Uneven Surfaces and slips, trip and falls**

- Pupils' clothing and footwear is checked for appropriateness prior to leaving school.

## **Weather conditions**

- If there are adverse weather conditions: torrential rain, thunder and lightning etc, the event will be cancelled.

## **Activity specific issues**

### **Swimming**

- Public in the leisure centre: Children will be supervised by a member of staff at all times whilst changing. No members of the public will enter the changing rooms at any time as staff will be present on the doors.
- Changing room arrangements: Girls and boys to change separately. Girls to be accompanied by female members of staff. Boys accompanied by male member of staff. Children are to meet in the communal area and line up before either going poolside or returning to school. Children and staff to be made aware of the arrangements.
- General public: Pool is closed to the public during set swimming times. Staff are to be vigilant about non staff during swimming sessions.
- Danger in or near water with large group of children: Danger of the pool and safety rules are shared with the children. Smaller group will be made for the water activities. Minimum of three members of staff to attend. Lifeguards will be on duty throughout the session.
- Children with low confidence in the pool: Only fully qualified, full DBS instructors are used by the leisure trust for non-swimming.
- Slips and trips whilst walking: Children will be reminded of walking and will be given instructions about where they need to go.
- Coach parking and exiting to venue: Coaches are to park on the correct side of the path or on the car park. Children to be instructed to walk to the venue supervised by adults.

## ***11 Critical incidents/Emergency Procedures***

A critical incident is an incident where any member of a group undertaking an educational visit or learning outside the classroom activity has either:

- suffered a life-threatening injury or fatality;

- is at serious risk;
- or has gone missing for a significant and unacceptable period.

Schools critical/ emergency plan follows National Guidance 4.1. Every visit leader and assistant leader must be familiar with emergency planning procedures and reporting mechanism. This forms part of the training delivered to EVCs.

Relevant emergency contact telephone numbers should be carried by leaders at all times during an offsite educational visit but should only be used in the case of a genuine emergency. Under no circumstances should these telephone numbers be given to young people or to their parents or carers.

### **Critical incidents response**

Planning and preparation of the school's response to a major incident, focussing on mitigating the impact of any emergency which may arise within the locality.

The plan co-ordinates the response and activities of the school and council by those directorates that may have a role to play in responding to the particular emergency. This may include the implementation of special arrangements by one or more of the emergency services, and/or the National Health Service. It includes major transport accidents, severe weather conditions, industrial accidents, fire, epidemics or terrorist activities.

The concept utilised is that termed Integrated Emergency Management and this involves working with the emergency services, utilities and voluntary agencies to ensure that together with the school and council's own directorates, all concerned work together with the common goal of returning the community to normality as soon as reasonably possible.

The service also oversees the council's Business Continuity Planning. It is the responsibility of Directorates and Service Areas to identify critical services, and construct plans to ensure the continuation of those services during times of disruption from both inside and outside influences.

### **First aid / Emergency Procedures**

All schools and services should consider the need for robust emergency arrangements as part of visit planning and risk assessment process.

## ***12 Safeguarding Children Procedures***

The Procedures apply to all children and young people aged 0 to 18 years.

They are addressed to all organisations, agencies and individuals who work with children and young people in Dudley, including those whose work with adults brings them into contact with children and young people.

**All organisations, agencies and individuals who work with children and young people in Dudley, including those whose work with adults brings them into contact with children and young people should understand these thresholds.**

### ***13 Inclusion***

Every effort should be made to ensure that educational visits and learning outside the classroom occurs across school. We have an **equitable** approach, in which activities are accessible to all, irrespective of special educational or medical needs, disability, ethnic origin, genre, sexuality or religion. If a visit needs to cater for children with special educational needs, every reasonable effort should be made to find a venue that is both suitable and accessible and that enables the whole group to participate and be involved.

The paramount consideration in this policy is the safety of all participants, and this is an overriding factor. In instances where a pupil is unable to attend the trip on safety or safeguarding grounds, staff will try to plan an equivalent activity or adapt the visit for the individual, or the experience will be made available to them within the school environment.

### ***14 Exclusion on the grounds of behaviour***

It may be reasonable to exclude a young person where their behaviour presents a significant, unmanageable and unacceptable risk to the health, safety and welfare of either themselves, or other members of the group, or the leaders.

The Equality Act protects people from discrimination and harassment based on the 'protected characteristics'. Where a young person has a behaviour difficulty that is not associated with a protected characteristic, then it is unlikely that the Equality Act applies. When a young person is excluded on these grounds, school will consider providing alternative ways of achieving the same learning outcomes. Where there is some doubt about including or excluding a young person on the grounds of their behaviour, the following points should be considered:

- Identifying the issue at the earliest stage of planning.
- Involving all interested parties.
- Establishing a behaviour management plan or a individual plan for the pupil with agreed action points that may enable inclusion on the visit.
- Establishing behaviour targets and timescales to be met to allow inclusion, or trigger a decision to exclude.
- Providing an additional adult, such as a parent or support worker, with a specific brief to manage behaviour issues.
- Ensuring that what is expected of staff is reasonable and within their competence.

- Recording this process.

## **14 Data Protection**

This policy adheres to the principles under data protection law. For further information please review the school's data protection policy published on the school's website.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Event Specific Notes (ESN) Module on Evolve**

Staff will use the following headings to help them when assessing risks for their venue and group:

#### **Purpose**

#### **Venues/External Providers**

- Types of activities, e.g. water based, adventurous
- Sleeping arrangements
- Overnight security
- Fire drill / evacuation procedure

#### **Travel Arrangements**

- Drivers hours
- Drivers qualifications/documentation
- Seat belts
- Comfort breaks
- Safety pre-embarkation brief, i.e. ferry, aeroplane

#### **Staffing & Attendees**

- Ratio
- Gender
- Group dynamics
- Missing child/meeting point
  
- Additional information to include
- Personal safety
- Emergency Plan
- Meds
- Kit/clothing
- Parents informed /aware of activities/trip
- Appendix list of things to consider