

## 5.0 Supervision and Staffing Ratios

For every educational visit there must be a designated Group Leader who oversees the entire visit and has the overall responsibility for supervision during the visit.



It may be necessary for groups to be split during the educational visit when undertaking particular activities. Each sub-group should have a competent supervisor, who should normally be a teacher or other competent member of school or IYPS staff. Supervision will be most effective, when all supervisors and group members clearly understand the aims and objectives of the educational visit and supervisors have a reasonable knowledge of the children/young people, (including any special educational, medical needs or disabilities), and when the educational visit and activities are carefully risk assessed and managed safely. This includes laying down clear guidelines for standards of behaviour, which all on the educational visit must adhere to.

As long as there is adequate supervision not all supervisors need be on duty all the time, however duty supervisors need to be able to respond appropriately to emergencies. Duty supervisors must not consume alcohol or be under the influence of any other substance. Supervisors who are off duty are expected to behave in a professional manner.

### 5.1 Supervision Strategies

There are three types of supervisory strategy described within this section; Close, Distant and Remote. Although the choice

of strategy should not be based solely on age, older, more experienced young people should be expected, under normal circumstances, to understand and achieve more and may not require such close supervision. Regardless of how the group is supervised the identities of all group members must be known to all supervisors and the Group Leader. The overall group management, routes of communication and headcount procedures must be agreed and known. The destination location must be known, pre-visited where possible and risk assessed along with any activities to be undertaken.

#### Close or Direct Supervision

This strategy involves group members undertaking activities in close or direct contact with their Group Leader/supervisors. Examples that require this level of supervision may include visits involving young or inexperienced group members, group members with special educational or behavioural needs, when undertaking particularly hazardous activities or when it is identified as necessary by the visit risk assessment.

Large groups that require close supervision should have a simple communication system in place that allows the Group Leader to be free of immediate supervision, so as to allow time to check all is well with all group members and permit immediate intervention when necessary (e.g. during emergencies).

Group movement management systems must be agreed, known and suitable instructions given to all pupils/young people e.g. getting on and off transport, collection points and rendezvous places, crossing roads, walking in urban contexts, provision of buffer zones between the group and any significant hazards.

Behaviour management systems must be

known and suitable instructions given to all children/young people e.g. reinforcement, reward strategies; incident intervention strategies; codes of conduct (general and particular to activities). This may involve the final sanction of returning to base or returning the child home to the parents.

#### Distant Supervision

This strategy involves group members working in small parties; with leaders or supervisors continuously monitoring the group and intervening where necessary. Examples may include visiting a museum or non-hazardous fieldwork (e.g. away from water).

This strategy should only be employed where there has been either a history of a particular group / type of visit working well using this type of supervision and / or the visit risk assessment identifies it as an acceptable control. Before considering distant supervision there must be a reasonable expectation of suitable behaviour by group members (evidenced from working with them previously or elsewhere, not just hoped for).

The geography / physical area of location visited should be clearly defined. It may be necessary to introduce the group to the area and its boundaries before exercising distant supervision. Group numbers must be clearly established (e.g. minimum of 4 members but not so large as to be intimidating). Group member behaviour and code of conduct must be reinforced along with expectations for the group prior to the visit.

All group members must know who the Group Leader and Supervisors are and where they will be; some supervisors should be in a known location, others should be monitoring or moving through the activity area. Group members must be clear about what to do if they get lost or if there is an incident or emergency.

'Down time' during a residential

educational visit usually requires distant supervision. Poor procedures can cause serious incidents or create the possibility for them to occur. All group members should be made aware of their responsibilities and what their behavioural expectations are. Parents must be informed before the visit if any form of distant supervision likely to take place.

#### Remote Supervision

This strategy entails the Group Leader or supervisors not being with the group during stages of the venture; it often involves monitoring from a distance and checking on progress at suitable intervals during agreed meetings or rendezvous.



The aim of educational visits for older children / young people may be to encourage independence and the development of investigative skills. Some adventurous activities such as those under the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme require children / young people to work in small groups without direct supervision. Some academic fieldwork may be remotely supervised.

Remote supervision is technically harder to manage than other supervision strategies and this requires a well qualified and experienced Group or Activity Leader to provide suitable training for group members in the activity prior to the educational visit. Particular attention needs to be given to information provided to children/young



people before direct or distant supervision can be withdrawn. Training given to children / young people must be sound and thorough and individual capabilities should be suitably assessed.

The Group Leader must establish during the educational visit's planning stage whether each child / young person is competent for remote supervision. The Group Leader must be satisfied that all have acquired the necessary skills and have the necessary experience, confidence, physical ability and judgement to be left without direct or distant supervision.

Remote supervision should normally only be implemented at the end of a phased development programme. The withdrawal of direct or distant supervision should be a gradual four-stage process; the group's success in coping at each stage should be reviewed before proceeding to the next stage. The four stages include the Group Leader / competent Supervisor: -

- Accompanying the group.
- Shadowing the group.
- Checking regularly at agreed locations.
- Checking occasionally at agreed locations.

The Group Leader remains responsible for group members whether or not they are in direct contact with the group. Any monitoring system must allow for intervention if or when needed. Group support processes should be in place locally as well as at school/home-base should an incident or emergency take place.

Parents must be informed before the visit if any form of remote supervision is to take place.

**In addition when supervision is remote: -**

- Groups must be sufficiently trained and assessed as competent for the level of activity to be undertaken including any first aid and emergency procedures, will be familiar with the environment or

similar environments and have details of the rendezvous points.

- Clear and understandable boundaries are set for the group.
- There must be clear lines of communication between the group, the Group Leader and the school or IYPS team leader. They should not rely exclusively on mobile phones.
- The Group Leader or competent Supervisor should monitor the group's progress at appropriate intervals.
- The Group Leader or competent Supervisor will be in the activity area and be able to reach the group promptly should the group need support in an emergency.
- There should be a recognised point at which the activity is completed / terminated.
- There should be clear arrangements to terminate the activity when it cannot be completed safely.

## 5.2 Headcounts

Whatever the length and nature of the educational visit, regular head counting of children must take place. Headcounts must be taken by a responsible member of staff using a checklist of names. Headcounts must be taken at every departure and at suitable times during a visit. When undertaking the headcount the checker must physically see the person before ticking their name on the checklist. All Supervisors should carry a list of all children and adults involved in the educational visit at all times. Children, particularly in years 1 to 3 should be easily identifiable, especially if the visit is to a densely populated area. Brightly coloured T-shirts or caps may help, but children should not wear name badges. However it may be useful to provide badges displaying the name of the school or an emergency contact telephone number.

## 5.3 Supervisory Agreements with Activity Providers

Many groups attend day or residential educational visits to centres or organisations that provide activity sessions. It is important to remember that overall pastoral care for the group remains with the Group Leader and competent Supervisors with the support of designated responsible adults.

Activity coaches and instructors must be qualified and competent. They are responsible for the technical care of the group during any activity sessions they manage. It is vital to agree a handover of responsibility for children / young people at the start and end of an activity session. To avoid problems the handover should be explicit to all group members and instructors, be in a known place and involve the Group Leader.

## 5.4 Adult to Child/Young Person Ratios

The required supervision levels will vary depending on the activity, age of participants, group size, location of the educational visit and the efficient use of resources. As a general guide for visits to low risk sites; for example, a museum under normal circumstances, supervisory ratios might be: -

- 1 adult for every 6 children in school year 1 to 3 (under 5s reception class would have a higher ratio).
- 1 adult for every 10 to 15 children in school year 4 onwards. Please note when organising residential visits or visits abroad there should be an absolute minimum of 3 adults; in case a member of the supervisory team is injured, taken ill or requires to be accompanied to hospital.





The table below offers more detailed guidance which applies where the Group Leader and Supervisors are experienced and competent:

Activity	Maximum Ratios	Notes
<b>Local Visits</b> Visits in the local area close to support at school/base (minimum of two supervisors required except under exceptional circumstances)	<b>Reception</b> <b>Better than 1:6</b> Years 1-3      1:6 Years 4-6      1:10-15 Years 7-13      1:15 (one supervisor per activity or supervision group)	A minimum of one qualified and competent Group Leader is needed for every group or class; they can be supported by other responsible adults.  Please note minimum ratios are not recommended but small working groups of 6 -12 remain the target.
<b>Day Visits</b> More than 60 miles or one hour from school/base (minimum of two supervisors required)	<b>Reception</b> <b>Better than 1:6</b> Years 1-3      1:6 Years 4-6      1:10-15 Years 7-13      1:15 (one supervisor per activity or supervision group)	
<b>Residential Visit, UK or abroad</b> (minimum of three supervisors required)	<b>Reception</b> <b>Better than 1:6</b> Years 1-3      1:6 Years 4-6      1:10 Years 7-13      1:10 (one supervisor per activity or supervision group, these do not include any centre residential staff)	As well as the above requirements for every one/two unqualified supporting adults there should be one qualified and competent Supervisor.  There should be a minimum of three competent Supervisors.  Supervisors should reflect the gender of the group.
<b>Open Country</b> Working by water or away from a road or building	<b>Reception</b> <b>Better than 1:6</b> Years 1-3      1:6 Years 4-6      1:10 Years 7-13      1:12 (one supervisor per activity or supervision group, these do not include any centre residential staff)	Overall group sizes above 20 are not recommended at any one location at a time (supervision and sustainability issues). Similarly large groups should not be moving together in convoy. The numbers of qualified leaders will depend on the risk assessment.

Parents and volunteers may be asked to supplement the supervision ratio. They should be carefully selected and ideally they should be well known to the school.

Anyone who has not had a Disclosure and Barring Service DBS check should never be left in sole charge of children/young people.

Teachers, staff and other adult-supervisors should ensure that whenever possible they are not alone with a child/young person. This provides protection for all parties.

The ratios and supervision strategies need to be complemented by a clear knowledge of the competence of those supervisors, volunteers and other responsible adults.

### The Need for a Higher Level of Supervision

Aside from the generic advice given on ratios within this section, the educational visit risk assessment should identify a suitable adult to group member ratio. The assessment should take into account the visit venue, its environment, the Group Leader's and Supervisor's qualifications, competencies and experience, as well as the age and experience of the children / young people in the group.

The number of adults should be increased if: -

- It is found that the environment or location of the educational visit site or activity presents significant hazards; e.g. poor visibility, poor security or prevailing physical hazards.
- If it is known that a group's, or an individual group member's behaviour or needs (education, physical or medical), requires particular management. This could mean a ratio as low as 1:1 in some circumstances with additional staff not being tied into other agreed supervision ratios.
- Teachers/Youth Leaders are inexperienced and are accompanying the group as part of an 'apprenticeship' to gather experience; this may mean them not being included in calculated supervision ratios.

### 5.5 Crossing Roads

This is undoubtedly one of the more dangerous activities that group leaders and supervisors will manage. Technically within the UK only the police, traffic wardens and officially designated crossing patrols have the right under law to control traffic. It is therefore important that there is a clear and agreed procedure that can be applied to reduce the risks. If possible there should be three supervisors present if crossing a group across a main road.

The following control measures may be used in drawing up such a procedure: -

- Where possible pre-visit the location; map out the intended walk route, so as to avoid the need to cross busy roads as far as is practicable.
- Where crossing a road is unavoidable, a safe crossing site must be chosen; where visibility is good in both directions (at least 100 metres) and there is a suitable collection point on both sides of the road; an area off the road preferably a pavement area.
- Gather the group on the inside of the pavement area at least one metre from the kerb.
- A wave of group members in controlled numbers crossing the road is recommended over the "crocodile approach".





- Decide on a manageable number of children/young people that can cross in a controlled line, line them up parallel to the kerb.
- One Group Supervisor should be positioned over the road before crossing the group. The group should approach the roadside on a suitable signal or command.
- If there are three Supervisors present, one should remain in control of the group at the set off point, one should remain at the collection point and one should cross the road with the group. Where there are two Supervisors, one supervisor should walk the group half way across the road to be met by the other supervisor who will continue walking the group to the collection point. The first supervisor will return to the remainder of the group at the set off point.
- Great emphasis must be placed on crossing roads and understanding traffic direction when abroad.

### 5.6 The Buddy System

The buddy system is a way of creating a culture of partnership between staff and group members. This is ideal for residential based educational visits or activities that may last for more than one day. An 'Educational Visit Council' may be set up involving more mature group members from each educational visit group, who will help to make decisions on how the visit or activity is run and feedback any concerns the rest of the group may have. To be successful, meetings should be held with the Group Leader on a regular basis. Assigned group members may offer limited support to staff at break and lunchtimes, as monitors. This does not remove any responsibility for the pastoral care of the group from the Group Leader or supervising adults.



## 6.0 Risk Assessment



Risk assessment and risk management are legal requirements. For educational visits it involves a careful examination of what could cause harm during the course of the visit. Risk assessment should be proportionate to the hazards associated with the visit. Those visits which require local authority approval should be assessed formally and assessments recorded, for day to day low risk activity a more flexible approach is acceptable. Risk assessments must be recorded, either as part of lesson plans, schemes of work, or model risk assessments can be used. It does not require professional health and safety expertise but may require specialised information for some types of visit. Head

Teachers, IYPS Area Youth Coordinators and Facility Managers should ensure the person assessing the risks is competent to do so. The aim of the risk assessment is to ensure nobody gets hurt or becomes ill during the course of, or as a result of the educational visit. This section gives an outline of how to undertake a simple risk assessment but for more information regarding risk assessments. You may wish to refer to Liverpool City Council's Risk Assessment Guidance Note GN 26 "Risk Assessment" available on the Council intranet or on Ednet. HSE produce guidance on risk assessment – "Five steps to risk assessment" (indg 163) <http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg163.pdf>