

any medical conditions that may affect their safety or that of others during the activity. In the case of epilepsy, the instructor must be made aware of whom the child/young person is and should be provided with brief information as to the form the seizures take. Medical clearance must be obtained from both the parents and medical practitioner. Epileptics may be required to have a spotter to provide one-to-one supervision whilst in the pool.

Diving

Diving may only take place where the water has a vertical depth of at least 1.5 meters and a forward clearance at this depth of a minimum of 7.6 meters and must be supervised by a competent supervisor who has no other responsibilities during the lesson.

9.2 Swimming in Open Inland Waters

Many educational visits will have open water as a feature of the area visited. Open inland water such as rivers, lakes, reservoirs or canals present unacceptable risks to swimmers. These include vegetation and other underwater obstructions, sudden changes in depth, and temperature as well as pollution. Authority Regulations prohibit swimming in open inland water. The only exception is where swimming takes place as part of a water-sports activity such as canoeing, which must only be permitted if it forms part of the organised programme and it must be in accordance with relevant Local Authority Regulations.

9.3 Swimming in the Sea

The risks to those swimming in the sea are considerably greater than those presented by a heated swimming pool. Swimming ability is further reduced by heavy waves, low temperatures, and undercurrents. The age and ability of the swimmers, the conditions of the sea, beach and weather, the presence of beach lifeguards, the life-saving ability of the adult in charge, and

the safety equipment available should be taken into account when deciding to swim. Swimming in the sea must only be permitted if the following conditions are met as a minimum standard: -

- Swimming is a formal and supervised activity in a recognised bathing area that has official surveillance e.g. qualified lifeguard cover.
- A minimum supervision ratio of one to eight with a minimum of two adults present.
- At least one member of staff/supervising-adult must remain on watch at the water's edge and must not swim.
- If no life guard service is available at least one adult holding a current Royal Lifesaving Society National Beach Lifeguard Qualification must be present.
- The permitted swimming area must be defined and clear to all participants.
- Swimming must not take place within one hour of eating.
- Swimmers should swim in water of no more than waist depth and should swim parallel to the shore.
- Before entering the water all participants must be briefed as to emergency procedures including the signal to leave the water.
- Children/young people must be counted on entering and leaving the sea.
- The following life-saving and safety equipment should be available during the session: -
 - > A whistle.
 - > Floats or throw-line.
 - > First aid equipment.
 - > Warm clothing.
 - > A reflective blanket.
 - > Survival bag.
 - > A beach assembly marker e.g. poles or flags.

10.0 Farm Visits

Farms can be dangerous places with specific hazards that may arise from slurry or grain pits, potentially dangerous machinery, electric fences, uneven and/or slippery ground, chemical and other stores, as well as potentially dangerous live stock. Therefore educational visits to farms require particularly careful planning.

10.1 Prior to the Educational Visit

Regard should be given to the following issues prior to the educational visit taking place: -

- Prepare the children/young people thoroughly so they know what to expect, and what is expected of them (see code of conduct) during the educational visit.
- Ensure all those attending the educational visit wear suitable clothing and footwear.
- Ensure all those attending the educational visit have been informed of any specific hazards.
- Children/young people should not be allowed in animal pens.
- Preferably undertake an exploratory visit to check the farm suitable for the intended educational visit. It should be well managed, have a good reputation for safety standards, animal welfare and maintain suitable washing and other welfare facilities that can be used by the visiting party.
- Ensure that the farmer or the farm manager is fully aware of the limit of the visiting group's knowledge and awareness of the countryside and of agriculture.
- Discuss and agree the visit requirements, organisation (especially emergency arrangements) and programme of activities with the farmer or site manager.

10.2 Code of Conduct

All those involved in a farm visit should be informed of the required code of conduct prior to the visit and knowledge of that code checked, it should then be constantly enforced during the visit.

The farm-visit code of conduct should include the following: -

- Listen carefully and follow the instructions and information given by the Group Leader and supervisors.
- Do not use or pick up tools (e.g. spades, forks etc.) unless permitted to do so by farm staff and the Group Leader/supervisors.
- Do not ride on tractors or other machinery.
- Do not climb on walls or into animal pens.
- Approach animals quietly and gently.
- Do not frighten or torment animals.
- Do not play in the farm area.

10.3 Hygiene on the Farm

All farms have a degree of bacterial contamination. All animals naturally carry a range of micro-organisms that can be transmitted to humans. Some infections such as E-Coli 0157 present a serious hazard as they can potentially cause a severe illness. The risk from such an illness is particularly great to children under the age of six. The risk of infection can be readily controlled by good hygiene practices, these should include: -

- Ensure there are adequate levels of supervision to ensure suitable control.
- No eating or drinking allowed outside of designated eating areas.
- Do not eat food that has fallen on the ground.

- Do not suck fingers or put pens, pencils or other objects your mouth.
- Wash hands, especially before eating, after any contact with animals and before leaving the farm.
- Wear appropriate clothing including suitable footwear (Wellingtons / boots).
- Clean or change footwear before leaving the farm, then wash hands.
- Cover all cuts and grazes especially on the hands with a waterproof dressing.
- Do not place your face against the animals or kiss animals.
- Do not taste any animal foodstuffs.

If a member of the group shows signs of illness (e.g. sickness or diarrhoea) after the visit, they and / or their parent / guardian should be advised to contact the doctor and explain that they have had recent contact with animals.



11.0 Use of Contractors (Providers) and Tour Operators

Schools, Integrated Youth and Play Service and other services need to make informed choices about the suitability of contractors of educational visits and outdoor centres in order to ensure, as far as is practicable, the health and safety of the pupils and others involved.



Contracted providers of educational visits include; tour operators, expedition providers, outdoor education centres, local farms, civic museums as well as national bodies such as the YHA.

Accidents can happen even during the most carefully managed activities. When considering an educational visit to an Activity Centre or when planning to use an Activity Provider, schools and other services must satisfy themselves on matters such as the company's safety policy, levels of instructor competence, qualifications and standard of equipment. For example, check that contacted providers hold an up-to-date Adventure Activity Licence, or a Learning Outside the Classroom quality mark as

these provide evidence that they comply with nationally accepted standards. To assist in this assessment the following issues should be considered: -

- **Safety Policy Statement**
Ask the contracted provider for evidence of:
 - > An up-to-date and suitable health and safety policy.
 - > The way in which the policy is brought to the attention of staff.
 - > The way in which the contractor monitors his health and safety arrangements.
- Health and safety arrangements
Ask the contracted provider for evidence: -
 - > That every reasonable measure has been taken to reduce the risk of the occurrence of an accident or ill health.
 - > Of how the contractor actively promotes the awareness of health and safety amongst his own staff. For example, via training; team safety meetings; accident feedback reports etc.
 - > Of independent verification of health and safety arrangements e.g. if an external professional body audits the contractor's health and safety precautions.
- **Insurance**
Ask the centre or provider for evidence that they have adequate public liability insurance and how their insurance policy affects your School or Youth Service insurance cover. Those Schools and Youth Services that are insured by the City Council should contact the Council's Treasury Management/ Insurance Unit.