

## Offsite Visits Policy

### Introduction

Visits and adventurous activities are an essential part of a participant's development, helping them to learn about assessing and managing risk, and to gain skills in leadership and team working. They also build self-esteem and allow participants to encounter a range of normal social experiences.

This policy outlines The Britannia Youth Organisation's arrangements for organising trips and off site visits for participants.

This policy forms part of the BYO's arrangements for managing health and safety risks and complying with health and safety law. The Board of Directors has a duty to ensure it is implemented.

Forms and sources of further information can be found on our website. They are also available in paper format upon request.

### Within this policy the following definitions will be used:

**Visits:** Includes trips, holidays, and adventurous activities taking place away from the establishments' normal location.

**Recreational Visits Co-ordinator (RVC):** A competent person appointed by the Governor, to assist in the planning and management of visits.

**Group Leader:** The person who is in-charge/responsible for and present at the visit. Leadership can be delegated, but line of command and responsibilities need to be clearly defined.

**Assistant:** Someone who has been given responsibility for the safety and well-being of a group of children.

**Other Staff:** Those staff on the trip who are employed by BYO.

**Participants:** Includes children and young people participating in the visit.

**Parent:** Includes anyone with parental responsibility for the child or young person. This will either be the mother, father (if married to the mother) or someone who has been given parental responsibility by court order or agreement (ratified by the court).

**Adventurous Activity:** Includes the core activities defined in the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996 (climbing, caving, remote trekking, waterborne activities) and other activities that present hazards over and above those in everyday life. Such activities would normally require supervision by a competent person with specialist skills in the activity.

# Legal Framework and Responsibilities

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Board of Directors of BYO, as employer, has a duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of their employees and others affected by their work activities. This includes participants in off site visits.

The Directors are also required, under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, to:

- assess risks arising from activities;
- implement suitable control measures;
- provide information, training and supervision;
- monitor their arrangements for controlling risk.

Although the ultimate responsibility for health and safety rests with the Board of Directors, specific tasks are delegated to individuals as defined in this policy.

This policy outlines the responsibilities of those involved in the organisation of visits, standards of competence and the arrangements for assessing risk and implementing suitable control measures. It also outlines how the governing body will monitor the arrangements.

The Governor and employees involved with organising or supervising visits also have a legal duty to take reasonable care of their own and others' health and safety and to co-operate with the Board of Directors to enable it to meet its health and safety responsibilities. This will be achieved through complying with the policy and following the associated guidance.

Affiliated staff owe a duty to take reasonable care for the safety and welfare of participants whilst participants are involved in organisational activities or are present for the purposes of a organisational activity. The duty is to take such measures as are reasonable in all the circumstances to protect participants from risks of harm that reasonably ought to be foreseen. This requires not only protection from known hazards, but also protection from harm that could foreseeably arise and against which preventative measures can be taken.

In discharging their duty of care responsibilities, affiliated staff must exercise their professional judgement to achieve a balance between ensuring that participants do not face an unreasonable risk of harm and encouraging participants' independence and maximising learning opportunities.

When non-affiliated staff, volunteers and external providers agree to perform tasks that require them personally to care for participants (in the absence of a member of the affiliated staff), they will also owe a duty to take such measures as are reasonable in all the circumstances to protect participants from risks of harm that reasonably ought to be foreseen.

# Responsibilities

The Board of Directors must:

- ensure that BYO is following the policy and guidance on visits;
- check that those organising visits have the required level of competence for the type of visit;
- check proposals for certain types of visit, including those involving an overnight stay or travel outside the UK. Where necessary seek further specialist advice;
- check that the Governor can demonstrate that their plans:
  - comply with the Organisation's Health and Safety Policy;
  - have specific and clearly stated objectives;
  - include reasonable measures to include those with special needs;
  - are provided early, to allow plenty of time for pre-visits etc. (Complex ventures may require up to 2 years planning)
- ensure that those organising visits have sufficient support, time and resources to fulfill their responsibilities;
- be aware that their role is to ask questions, not to advise or become directly involved in risk assessments.

# The Governor

The Governor has overall responsibility for the safety and management of trips.

## The Recreational Visits Coordinator (The RVC)

The Recreational Visits Coordinator (The RVC) has overall responsibility of the operational and day to day management of trips and must ensure that:

- they comply with the BYO's policy and associated guidelines on visits and other relevant policy documents;
- they, and other staff involved in organising or supervising the visit, have the required level of competence. This should take account of their supervisory ability and their competence in relation to the specific activity;
- sufficient time and resources are allocated to the planning stages;
- sufficient time and resources are allocated to meeting identified training needs;
- a full risk assessment has been carried out and suitable control measures are in place; - this should be based on a knowledge of the location/centre where the activity will take place;
- where required by the policy, only activity providers who are licensed for adventurous activities and/or accredited under non-statutory schemes are used and that the safety arrangements of other providers (e.g. farms, museums) are assessed prior to use;
- that arrangements are in place for the Board of Directors to be informed of non-routine visits in good time, so that questions can be asked;
- child protection procedures are in place;
- all necessary actions have been completed before the visit begins;
- suitable emergency arrangements are in place, including ensuring a contact with the Governor to make decisions, is available at all times;
- visits are monitored and evaluated, to inform operation of future visits, future training needs etc.;
- they comply with the arrangements in this policy.

The Governor may delegate these tasks to a competent visits coordinator (RVC), however ultimate responsibility remains with the Governor.

## Group Leader

Group Leaders on visits act as employees of the Board of Directors, whether the visit takes place within normal hours or outside those hours, by agreement with the Governor and/or Directors.

Group leaders have specific responsibilities relating to the organisation of the visit. Adult volunteers, participants and parents/carers should also be made aware of their responsibilities during visits.

Group Leaders must do their best to ensure the health and safety of everyone in the group as they have a duty of care to the students in their charge. These, and staff dealing with participants with additional needs (SEND), owe a higher duty of care than parents due to their specialist knowledge and training.

They should:

- give instructions to participants, trip assistants, parents and control the group;
- where appropriate stop the visit or activity, if they think the risk to the health and safety of the students in their charge is unacceptable.

## Trip Assistant

The Trip Assistant should work with the group leader and team to assist with the safe practice and operational logistics of the trip.

## Arrangement

All visits must be authorised by the Governor

## Visits Organisers/Group leaders/Assistants

Those leading and organising or assisting visits must be competent to do so. The Governor or Visits Coordinator must assess competence, taking account of their staff's ability to lead, manage and control the students partaking in the visit. Competence on specific activities may also be necessary, as well as knowledge of the venue being visited.

## Adventurous Activities

If the Organisation is leading an adventurous activity, the Governor must ensure that the group leader and other trip assistants are suitably competent to lead or instruct the participants in the activity, bearing in mind that some participants may be novices. Where there are concerns regarding the competencies/experiences of instructor's external advice will be sought.

## Other Areas

- Staff competence in first aid, minibus driving, life-saving etc. may also be needed, depending on the activity. Group leaders and assistants will also require induction training prior to a specific visit. Training requirements in these areas should be identified as part of the risk assessment process.

## Risk Assessment

Risk assessment and risk management are legal requirements. The risk assessment for visits involves the careful examination of what could cause harm during the visit, the risk of that harm and whether enough precautions have been taken or whether more should be done. The aim is to make sure no one gets hurt or becomes ill. The control measures should be understood by all those involved.

- Risk assessments should explicitly cover how special needs (e.g. educational, medical) are to be addressed. The programme of a visit, as set out in the risk assessment and the consent form, should not be deviated from and should include details of emergency/contingency measures.
- The content of the risk assessment will be appropriate to the trip but should include assessments for:
  - Means of transport
  - Activities
  - Venue
  - Individual needs
  - Ongoing (Active risk management that takes place as the visit unfolds).

In addition to the above, individual risk assessment of participants whose vulnerability, behaviour or other factors may put them or others at greater risk should be carried out. This should normally form part of their existing care planning process.

## Visit/Site Specific

- Will differ from place to place and group to group. The group leader organising visits is responsible for carrying out visit /site specific risk assessments with the team. The Visits Coordinator will ensure an adequate risk assessment is carried out. The risk assessment must be submitted by the group leader to the Visits Coordinator at least 4 weeks prior to the visit.

## Ongoing/Dynamic Assessment

There is an expectation the group leader will reassess risks while the visit is taking place, making judgements and decisions as the needs arise.

## Guidance on writing trip risk assessment

- All staff will be provided with appropriate induction and training to ensure the appropriate guidance and procedures for staff are in place before planning and taking a visit.
  - Initially, walk through the procedure (the visit/activity) in your mind's eye and note down the sequence of events that has to take place.
  - Make sure you always involve other people in the assessment to help you.
  - Risk assessments need to be completed on the standard form.
  - Check against the generic risk assessments for activities, accommodation and travel to see whether you consider if it covers all that you have noted. If it doesn't, write down on the risk assessment form the trip specific additional hazards for these areas along with the controls.
  - Check with organisation data on specific hazards and controls for individuals as well as identifying procedures for covering medical or emergency arrangements then add these to assessment form.
  - Review the information regarding sites that host visits such as venue visitor assessments. The information will assist you to identify any particular hazards arising from using the venue.
  - External venues may be well-frequented and documented through other routes, such that highly relevant information is readily available from those who already have experience of the site or even from the site operators themselves. In fact, any available pooled information is likely to be the most valuable starting point when considering an appropriate venue.
  - If possible, obtain a copy of a risk assessment carried out by the venue proprietors that addresses the hazards, risks and precautions related to visitors and, ideally, young people. This should certainly be available from most good venues.
  - If no venue assessment is available, then if at all possible (and if considered important), try and arrange a pre-visit to a venue or location in order to establish any other issues that need to be included. At the very least, try and consult another colleague or establishment who may have visited on a previous occasion and/or speak to someone appropriate at the venue to help establish facts.
  - Once you have collated these assessments ensure that you have detailed any additional precautions needed, either for the generic or for those hazards identified as trip specific.
- Check that the controls and precautions identified are sensible, workable and true. It may turn
- out that the generic assessment has idealistic precautions that in fact are not exercised and are therefore not in place, so be honest. Check that they are in place if in doubt.
  - Remember that supervision is a common control, so if you use this then ensure that you have appropriate number of staff with suitable experience or training.
  - It's perfectly reasonable to formally add to or amend a generic risk assessment to include those 'new' risks you have identified in order that future similar trips and activities are made easier.

- Furthermore, following any visit, feedback will enable existing risk assessments to be reviewed and updated if need be.
- Nearly all controls and precautions required to reduce risk to 'as low as reasonably practicable' will require good management and sound health and safety systems in order to be effective. It is important to ensure that the measures to reduce risk that you have stated on the risk assessment form are workable and firmly in place and not merely idealistic.
- Remember: If it is on the risk assessment form it must be in place.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

The following arrangements must be in place to ensure that visits and the arrangements for organising them are effectively monitored. Meet with the team to evaluate the trip. The minimum requirements are to review the safety (including near misses), suitability for objectives of the Organisation and logistics of the trip. Report back to the RVC and update risk assessment if appropriate.

Regular review of the organisations's procedures for visits to ensure they comply with the policy.

This may include checking paperwork during audit and/or requesting annual reports from the Visits Co-ordinator.

The Board of Directors may also request that they be informed of specific types of visit well in advance, so that they can check specific arrangements.

## Emergency procedures and guidance

Emergency procedures are an essential part of planning a trip or fixture and should be included as part of your risk assessment and trip documentation.

An emergency is difficult to define. It may be a fracture, food poisoning, an illness requiring immediate medical treatment or a fatality. It may on the other hand be missing participants who are soon found, or a coach crash in which no serious injuries are sustained. The following notes are for guidance.

The procedures listed will not all apply to all emergencies.

1. Assess the nature and extent of the emergency
2. Make sure all other group members are safe from danger and are looked after
3. Render first aid and attend to any casualties
4. Call the emergency services required. As a minimum you will need to know:
  - a. Precise location
  - b. Description of the accident
  - c. Number of casualties
  - d. Nature of injuries
  - e. Total number in the party
  - f. Your telephone number



5. Contact your designated emergency contact at BYO with the details listed in 4. and:

- a. Names and telephone number if necessary of individuals involved
- b. Names of other members in the party
- c. Action taken so far
- d. Action to be taken and by whom
- e. Telephone numbers for on-going future communication.

6. Where involved, the police will take any statements.

7. An adult from the party should accompany any casualties to hospital where physically possible.

8. Supervise and support the remainder of the group and arrange with the emergency contact for their return to your base or home.

9. Arrange for one adult to remain at the incident site to assist/liaise with the emergency services if possible.

10. Write down all relevant details whilst still fresh in your memory. Other individuals may be asked to do the same. A record should be kept of names and addresses of any witnesses. Keep any equipment involved in its original condition. If possible, do not disrupt the scene of the incident until a full investigation has been completed.

11. Restrict access to a telephone until you have informed the emergency contact and there has been sufficient time for him/her to contact those directly involved.

12. Legal liability should not be discussed or admitted.

13. Complete and forward all accident forms and reports to the Board of Directors.

The designated emergency contact will contact The Governor immediately and will form a response team as required to support and control any incident and identify actions required.

All enquiries from the press must be directed to The Governor.

The designated emergency contact will arrange to contact parents/carers of those involved as soon as possible.

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.

In the event of notification of an emergency, the group leader will contact The Governor.

# Terrorism

## General considerations for all visit types

- Stay alert to local and national news before and during
- Stay away from visits to religious or political venues and events that could be considered higher risk
- Assess the needs of SEND participants and their ability to react and respond to dynamic situations
- Provide contact details of visit leaders for parents to contact during the trip
- Remind participants to remain vigilant and alert, reporting anything suspicious to leaders
- Remain alert to more 'usual' crime since this remains far more likely than terrorism
- Brief participants in advance that if they are caught up in a security situation, that they should try and get away as quickly but safely from the immediate vicinity as possible, leaving baggage or other belongings behind
- Brief participants in advance to follow instructions of police or security forces at all times, being mindful that they may be armed and appear more intimidating than they are used to. Officers might be extremely forceful, direct and may even point weapons directly at them and others
- Brief participants what to do if separated from each other in the event of a security incident. This should include designating specified physical meeting points and contact telephone numbers for staff. Remember that mobile phones may not work in the immediate hours after an incident so it is additionally important to designate a meeting location.
- Data based communication services such as 'WhatsApp' might work even when voice calls don't so consider setting up a trip-specific 'WhatsApp' group for communicating in an emergency
- The group leader should carry a team list with all participant details, including medical conditions and next of kin noted
- Tell participants that if they are separated, to ask for assistance from a police officer or other security official and state that they are a part of a youth group.
- Be additionally vigilant in crowded places such as shopping malls, travel hubs and sports stadia

## In the event of a security incident on visit

- If groups are caught up in a security incident, Leaders should attempt to keep everyone together whilst moving away as quickly as possible. Keeping together may be difficult and is ultimately less important than speed of action and staying safe. Staying low and even better, moving away whilst behind solid objects such as concrete barriers or buildings (as opposed to just parked cars) will provide good protection
- Once accounted for, it may seem obvious to try and travel from the town or venue as soon as possible. If this involves public transport, it may not be the best option as some terrorist organisations plan secondary attacks that specifically target transport hubs
- The Group Leader should notify the home contact as soon as practicable, noting the known whereabouts of all members
- Advise The Governor as soon as possible so that a communication focal point can be set up for receiving next of kin and participants upon return to base.
- Arrange the group's return transport when the situation is sufficiently secure to do so. Parents should collect their children from the departure location rather than travel to the incident location
- The Organisation should communicate with parents using their normal methods where possible, including email and secure website areas

## Additional UK visit considerations

- Research the venue/s to avoid occasions when large crowds are likely or political demonstrations are planned in the area
- Liaise with venues in advance to understand their own security arrangements for youth groups and any individual events
- Stay alert to local and national news, especially for any changes to official UK security threat levels

## Additional overseas visits considerations

- Research and adhere to the Foreign Commonwealth Office (FCO) advice for the country being visited, noting any specific advice for cities or areas or via X (formerly Twitter) @FCOtravel
- Subscribe to updates for the country and carry a smart phone or tablet that can access these updates whilst overseas
- Remember to do the same for any countries that are being transited
- Confirm with insurers that they will cover costs resulting from acts of terrorism, including medical care, repatriation and cancellation/curtailment. Consider adding this cover if possible as it is often an exclusion on non-specialist travel insurance

- Tour operators should describe their own risk assessment and arrangements following terrorist threats and acts, including the possibility for changing destinations even if FCO advice has not changed (to specifically advise against travel)
- Scan copies of passports, visas and travel insurance details and save these onto a secure cloud-based storage system in case of lost documents following an incident.
- Avoid political or religious celebrations / demonstrations or venues. Contact embassies or high commissions in advance of any proposed visits to these locations
- Avoid locations that are synonymous with Western or European tourism if possible – especially popular bars, cafes, luxury hotels or restaurants. Rural and small towns generally attract a lower risk of terrorism than cities and principal tourist attractions
- Enforce participant awareness to cultural sensitivities, clothing and behaviour
- Participant behaviour and overall group presence and posture should be orthodox and not draw additional attention
- Comply with instructions from legitimate security forces and officials. If Leaders are unsure of their credibility and time is available, seek advice from the Embassy or High Commission by telephone
- Check with your mobile telephone operator before departure to confirm that international roaming and data services are enabled
- Groups leaders should carry a suitable first aid kit at all times, and also carry water purification tablets
- Notify your travel insurance provider as soon as possible if directly affected by terrorism and request repatriation assistance as soon as it is safe and secure enough to do so. The embassy will take a direct role in assisting British nationals and will in most circumstances also assist other passport holders. Consular assistance to youth groups will normally be prioritised over adult tourists

## Accident Reporting

Accidents and incidents do and will continue to happen on trips and fixtures by the very nature of the activities undertaken. Fortunately, they are rare and usually not that serious.

It is imperative that all accidents or significant near misses are reported, firstly because it is a legal requirement and the accident form may be used as evidence and secondly because an investigation into the underlying cause could help prevent further harm from occurring.

Remember reporting an incident is not a sign of negligence.

Accidents that occur off-site should be recorded using an accident report form.

Accidents that occur off-site should be recorded using an accident report form. If the accident happens at a third party venue the following steps should be taken:

- Enter the details in the accident book of the provider
- Obtain a copy of the accident book and attach to a completed Accident Report Form
- Record near misses, or near accidents in the same way and this will be used by the group leader as part of the evaluation form that is completed after the trip when the risk assessment would also be reviewed.

## Riddor

Certain more serious injuries, such as a broken limb, certain infectious diseases and conditions like carpal tunnel syndrome must be reported to the Health & Safety Executive via RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations). The Nominated Person for Safety will be able to assist staff with the forms should a member of staff or a participant in their care suffer such an incident.

## Insurance

The Governor will ensure that, well before the departure date, there is adequate insurance cover for the visit, taking account of the activities being planned. 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 visits:

- Employers' liability
- Public liability;
- Personal accident cover for teachers/staff/other adults and children;
- Cost of medical treatment

## Providers/Contractors

The Governor will ensure that checks are made on the health and safety competence of providers. This involves checking their safety policy, standards of competence and risk assessments. The use of providers that are licensed for adventurous activities and/or accredited under non-statutory schemes does not replace the need for the Governor to carry out a thorough risk assessment, based on knowledge of the location.

## Agencies

Where visits are carried out in partnership with or through other agencies which may have their own guidelines, there must be an agreement to follow whatever guidelines are considered to achieve the higher level of safety. If the agency does not have their own guidelines, this policy and guidance must be adhered to.

## Supervision and Child Protection

The Governor will ensure that supervision levels for the visit are adequate, taking account of the nature and age of the group, proposed activities, child protection arrangements and any individual care plans. Risk Assessment may identify that a higher level of supervision is appropriate.

## Entitlement & Charging

BYO advocates that off site visits and enrichment excursions offer potential to support learning, raise aspiration, and broadly benefit personal development. Where trips and visits by necessity incur a charge to parents/carers, if BYO is notified that any such charge (or part of the charge) will prohibit the participation of an individual student, the trip leader/organiser will undertake to raise this with the RVC, Governor or Board of Directors.

On a case by case basis, any barrier to participation will be given sympathetic consideration – with any possible financial assistance awarded.