



Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Guidance for Safe Inclusion on School Trips

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# Introduction

This guidance will help assess the risks and concerns when planning school trips that include pupils with known emotional wellbeing or mental health illnesses, or concerns. It can be used to consider whether reasonable adjustments can be made so that the pupil(s) can be included.

Outdoor learning, school trips and educational visits provide numerous benefits to young people, including improvements to mental health and wellbeing. It is important to remember **‘’every young person should expereince the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development whatever their age, ability or circumstances,’’** (Learning Outside the Classroom, Manifesto). However, mental health is becoming an increasing reason for hospitalisation and repatriation from visits according to the Expeditions Providers Association (EPA).

# Planning Ahead of a Visit

At the initial planning stage the visit leader should liaise with the Designated Safeguard Lead (DSL), Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) to check if there are any known additional needs, emotional wellbeing or mental health concerns affecting the intended group.

The visit leader needs a clear understanding of the pupils needs, triggers, behaviours and coping strategies used in school and at home.

A meeting to discuss the proposed visit and the pupil’s needs, should be arranged by the Visit Leader and Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) as soon as possible. People to include:

* Visit Leader
* EVC
* DSL
* SENCO or Individual Needs Assistant (INA)
* Parent, Carers
* Pupil (if relevant)
* Third party tour, activity (if relevant)
* Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) professionals (if relevant

## Points to discuss at a meeting

Consider:   
Signs, symptoms, triggers, behaviour, calming methods, medication, individual risk assessment or care plan, strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ), reports from CAMHS or medical practitioner, recent episodes or changes in behaviour, risk reduction plan, details of the trip, travel, activities, expectations, accommodation, insurance.

# Making Reasonable Adjustments

Use the template, ‘Reasonable adjustments record.’ (see the appendix). All options can be listed. Give consideration to the advantages and disadvantages of each option and this will help identify if any of the options are feasible.

By carefully working through each risk it may be possible to identify adjustments that can be put in place to include the pupil on the visit. For example, adjusting the itinerary to avoid a risk. Agreeing a clear procedure in order to avoid a trigger might be possible. Arranging for an additional member of staff to attend or asking a parent, carer to go on the trip might also be a solution.

However, there will be some situations where the risks are too high despite reasonable adjustments. It is acceptable to rule out an adjustment on the grounds of it being too expensive. If this is the case, explain to the pupil and parent, carers that each trip is assessed individually and try to identify a potential trip for the future. If the visit is part of the curriculum, the pupils not attending the visit should be able to achieve the learning objectives that have been set for the visit.

**It is important to note that every case should be treated individually. A reasonable adjustment for one child will not be the same for another.**

# Evidence

Please ensure all documentation is recorded and retained as this evidences how the final decision was reached. All forms of communication should be logged. This information should be shared with the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher will ultimately make the final decision.

# Disclosing Mental Health Concerns (undiagnosed or diagnosed)

If a member of staff has concerns for a pupils mental health this should be discussed internally with the DSL. If there is a significant concern for the child’s welfare then this can be disclosed to the parent, carers. If the individual is planning to attend an offsite visit any concerns should be discussed with the parent, carer and the child.

# Insurance

Most insurance providers, including East Sussex County Council’s (ESCC) insurance cover, will not be liable for ‘Bodily Injury’ loss or expense due to:

* suicide, attempted suicide or deliberate self-inflicted injury by the ‘Insured Person’ regardless of the state of their mental health

Therefore it is important that:

* insurance policy limitations are checked
* limitations are communicated to the Head Teacher, EVC, Visit Leader and Parent, Carer
* contingency plans are in place to manage the unlikely event of an uninsured injury
* if there was an emergency whilst on the visit, or prior to the visit taking place, it is important to inform the insurance provider on their emergency line. They will assess on a case by case basis if cover is provided.

# Definitions

**Reasonable**  
Various factors influence whether a particular adjustment is considered reasonable. These include:

* How effective the change will be in avoiding the disadvantage you would otherwise experience
* Its practicality
* The cost
* Their organisation's resources and size
* Availability of financial support

**Self-inflicted injury**  
The act of intentionally hurting oneself.

# Useful Contacts

**ESCC Outdoor Education Advisor**Telephone number**:** 07395283534  
Email: [leanne.bentley@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:leanne.bentley@eastsussex.gov.uk)

**ESCC Equality and Participation Team**  
Email: [equalityandparticipation @eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:equalityandengagementteam@eastsussex.gov.uk)

[**Equality and Human Rights website**](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

[**Outdoor Education Advisers Panel National Guidance website**](http://oeapng.info/)

[**Mental Health and behaviour in schools, Government advice website**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-and-behaviour-in-schools--2)

# Appendix

## Reasonable adjustments record template

1. List all the options or adjustments to enable inclusion. (All options should be documented even if not feasible).
2. Benefits and detriments of each option.
3. Decision of feasibility.
4. Discuss decision with the Head Teacher who will make the final decision based on the evidence.

**Situation, concerns:**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Option or Adjustments** | **Benefits of Option** | **Detriments of Option** | **Decision of Feasibility** | **Notes** |
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**Outcome:**

Visit Leader Signature: Date

Head Teacher Signature: Date