

# Educational Visits

## Introduction

Young people derive considerable benefit from taking part in educational visits, often participating in activities and experiences not available in the average classroom or youth club setting. It is widely acknowledged that such educational visits help young people to develop a wide range of valuable personal and social skills.

The vast majority of such visits take place without incident and it is evidently clear that those involved in planning and managing such visits are already demonstrating a high level of care, competence and safety awareness.

Occasionally serious incidents involving young people do occur and there is a growing concern amongst staff and parents that further steps are required in order to promote the highest standards of safety on any educational visit/trip.

### Definition of educational visit

“All academic, sporting, cultural, creative and personal development activities, which take place away from school and make a significant contribution to learning and the development of those participating.”

### Legal perspective

Under the common law duty of care, children, like all other citizens, are legally entitled to receive due care and attention in terms of their welfare and safety, by those in whose charge they are placed.

The safety and welfare of children in the charge of others is specifically addressed through a number of statutes, the basic requirements of which are set out below.

The common law “duty of care” is one, which is discharged daily by teaching staff and others who have a supervisory role concerning young people.

While the consequences of not adequately discharging any corresponding criminal duty cannot be insured against, this civil duty is however insurable under employee liability and public liability insurance provisions. It is nonetheless incumbent upon staff who are supervising young people to act reasonably in all circumstances, so that the personal safety and well being of those in their care is not jeopardised during the visit.

Employers have a legal obligation, both to their employees, and young persons in their care, to ensure that their health and safety is safeguarded while they are in any way affected by such Employers undertakings.

This duty is imposed through occupational health and safety statute, specifically under the Health and Safety at Work (NI) Order 1978, and is placed upon Employing Authorities to ensure that their management arrangements in general, but also those arrangements which encompass specific activities such as educational visits, are adequate to protect the health and safety of all those who are permitted to participate.

The manner in which such arrangements are developed is through the process of a risk assessment, the outcome of which acts as the basis for the organisation to establish what needs to be put in place to allow the activity to proceed in a way which sufficiently controls the risks to which those going on the visit may be exposed. This brief note is intended only as an introduction to educational visits and must be read in conjunction with the recently completed guidance booklet, “**Educational Visits, Policy, Practice and Procedures**”.