



**THE PERSE**  
PREP SCHOOL  
CAMBRIDGE

**POLICY  
and  
GUIDANCE  
on  
VENTURES**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 General

The number of Ventures and visits has increased over the last few years and our pupils have benefited accordingly. If all goes well, a venture can be tremendously worthwhile, educationally valuable and satisfying to organise. On the other hand, if in the rare event that a venture goes awry it can be demoralising and stressful for students, parents and organisers alike, and, at the worst, disastrous.

This document sets out the School's policy on ventures and visits, and provides instructions and guidance to members of staff who organise them. By following the guidelines, it is intended that problems and pitfalls can be avoided and that all those involved in a venture can return having benefited from the experience.

Many of the more detailed guidelines refer to residential and specialist ventures and will, self evidently, not apply, for example, to local, study, day ventures. If you are in any doubt as to whether a guideline applies to a venture which you are organising, you should raise the matter with the Head. The School's policy (see Section 1.2 below) applies to all ventures.

Reference is often made in the document to a "senior member of staff". For the purposes of this document, a "senior member of staff" means the Head, Deputy Head or the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC).

### 1.2 Overriding Considerations and the School's policy

The overriding considerations from the School's point of view and the School's policy are that:

- The venture must be organised and run with constant and thorough regard to the health and safety of all participants and those with whom they come into contact.
- The organizers of the venture must be aware of the actions to be taken in an emergency.
- Financial arrangements for the venture must be approved by the bursary and followed. Financial probity must be clearly demonstrable in all budgeting, transactions and record keeping.
- The Head must be fully informed at all stages (from early planning to return home) about the detailed arrangements for the venture.
- The School's procedural requirements, which are designed to assist members of staff in ensuring that the venture is managed correctly, must be met.
- The venture should be of genuine value to the pupils taking part in it.

### 1.3 Relevant Legislation and Guidance

The following list is not exhaustive: it is an indication of relevant legislation and further sources of guidance, copies of which are held in the office at the Upper School and can be accessed on request. These will be updated as appropriate.

Members of staff who take responsibility for a Venture are expected to make themselves familiar with the legislation and guidance appropriate to the type of venture which they are undertaking.

If the legislation or guidance, either within these guidelines, or listed here or elsewhere, is unclear, then members of staff must raise the matter with and seek assistance from the Deputy Head or Educational Visits Coordinator.

- DfES *Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits: A Good Practice Guide* is referred to often in this document (as DfES HASPEV). In particular, section 2.14 “Adventurous Activities” refers to specific paragraphs of the DfES publication. Essential elements in HASPEV are:
  - a) responsibilities for visits, including pupil behaviour
  - b) planning visits, including risk assessments and first aid
  - c) supervision, including ratios and vetting checks (for example, CRB checks for volunteers on overnight stays)
  - d) preparing pupils, including special and medical needs
  - e) communicating with parents
  - f) planning transport
  - g) insurance
  - h) types of visits
  - i) visits abroad
  - j) emergency procedures, including contact details and permission for emergency medical treatment if the parents cannot be contacted
  
- DfES *Standards for LEAs in Overseeing Educational Visits* Part 1 of a 3-part Supplement to DfES HSPEV
  
- DfES *Standards for Adventure* Part 2 of a 3-part Supplement to DfES HSPEV
  
- DfES *A Handbook for Group Leaders* Part 3 of a 3-part Supplement to DfES HSPEV
  
- DfES *Health & Safety: Responsibilities and Powers* clarifies responsibilities under existing health and safety legislation and explains who is responsible for the health and safety of school staff, pupils and others on school premises or when engaged on educational activities elsewhere including visits.

- DfES *Group Safety at Water Margins* covering learning activities that might take place near or in water.
- *Activity Centres (Young Persons' Safety) Act 1995* applies to all activity centres providing activities to people under 18 years. The Code provides for central inspection and licensing but members of staff should still make their own enquiries to be reasonably sure that the centre has a good reputation and adequate experience of supervision in children of the ages and capabilities contemplated.
- The British Activity Holiday Association *Outdoor Adventure Activity Providers Code of Practice* addresses written procedures; qualified personnel; a chain of responsibility; an accident and emergency reporting procedure; clearly defined responsibilities; and also facilities, standards, environmental concerns, statutory obligations, insurance and sub-contractors.
- *Package Travel etc Regulations 1992* apply to a travel firm that provides any two of: transport; accommodation; tourist services. The legislation does not generally apply to a school that organises its own tour.
- *Advice to Members, Taking Students off site (ATL)*

Specific guidance can also be obtained from other associations under which specific activities are organised such as the Sports Council; Royal Yachting Association; British Orienteering Federation and so on.

- *Health Advice for Travel* issued by the Department of Health covers vital information on avoiding health risks, planning for healthy travelling, obtaining Emergency Medical Treatment and the EHIC card – the passport to free or reduced emergency medical treatment in most European countries.
- *Rabies (Importation of Dogs, Cats & Other Mammals) (Amended) Order 1994.*
- Department of Health *SunSAFE website* ([www.doh.gov.uk/sunSAFE](http://www.doh.gov.uk/sunSAFE)), also accessible via the Health Development Agency website, provides details about national skin cancer prevention programmes.
- The Foreign and Commonwealth Office website – [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk) - provides helpful advice to potential travellers to different countries.
- Pandemic flu advice – Advice relating to pandemic flu can be obtained from the following organisations: World Health Organisation website - [www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/](http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/), The Foreign and Commonwealth Office website – [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk), DCSF teacher net website - [www.teachernet.gov.uk/emergencies/planning/flupandemic/](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/emergencies/planning/flupandemic/), Department of Health website -

[www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publichealth/Flu/PandemicFlu/DH\\_065157](http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publichealth/Flu/PandemicFlu/DH_065157), Health Protection Agency website -

[www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAweb&Page&HPAwebAutoListName/Page/1191942171181](http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAweb&Page&HPAwebAutoListName/Page/1191942171181) and NHS Direct website - [www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/).

- *The protection of Young People in the Context of International Visits* has a summary of key laws relating to children in EU countries.
- RGS Expedition Planning Handbook – ISBN I86197 0447 available at [www.rgs.org](http://www.rgs.org). The RGS website (Royal Geography Society) has lots of up-to-date expedition planning advice and guidance. Look under “Our work”, “Fieldwork and expeditions” “plan your own expedition”.
- BS8848 is the current British Standard for visits, fieldwork, expeditions and adventurous activities outside the UK. Please check that any provider of such a service (i.e. a tour company) is following BS 8848. Any independent expedition organised by Perse staff, e.g. PYEC, needs to be BS 8848 compliant. The full documentation can be downloaded from [www.bsi-global.com](http://www.bsi-global.com). The Deputy Head (staff) also has a copy in his office.

#### **1.4 In loco parentis : The Duty of Care**

The following extract is taken from the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) *Advice to Members, Taking Students Off-site*:

“The landmark case of *Fitzgerald v Northcote* clearly established that the authority (and responsibility) of a teacher in relation to a pupil is broadly the same as that of a parent in relation to a child, while the pupil is under the teacher’s control. This is often referred to as the *in loco parentis* responsibility. Although there has been some modification over the years – for example, the right to impose corporal punishment has been removed – the broad principle has stood the test of time.

The Courts’ judgement is that parents, on sending a child to school, delegate their own authority to the teacher so far as is necessary for the child’s welfare and so far as is reasonable to maintain discipline, both in the interests of the school as a whole and (above all) of the individual pupil. This principle is reinforced in the Children Act 1989.

In other words, Courts take the view that teachers should act as careful parents; if a teacher is aware of special factors that are not known to the parents, the Courts would expect the teacher to exercise the appropriate amount of care – which could well be higher than that exercised by parents.

A teacher<sup>1</sup> who takes a party away from school remains *in loco parentis* throughout the venture. The responsibility cannot be delegated to anyone else. If a teacher charged with the care of pupils is careless in their supervision, s/he may be liable in negligence to compensate the pupils or anyone else who suffers injury or damage and in cases of gross negligence or recklessness could be exposed to criminal penalties. However, Courts only expect teachers to take appropriate care, having regard to the nature of the visit. Obviously, the more hazardous or demanding the venture, and the younger or less able the pupils, the greater will be the level of care needed. Equally obviously, it is impossible to define a duty of care in the abstract.”

## 1.5 Local circumstances and decisions

Circumstances will arise, particularly on overseas residential ventures, where decisions have to be taken by the venture leader on matters which may not have been envisaged in this document. At these times, either it may be impossible to contact the nominated senior member of staff, or, indeed, the senior member of staff, a long way away on the end of a telephone, may be unable to provide the immediate advice being sought. In such circumstances, the venture leader must take decisions based on his/her professional knowledge and experience, and in light of local circumstances.

## 2. PREPARATION, APPROVAL AND ORGANISATION

### 2.1 Preliminary considerations

#### ***Is your venture really worthwhile?***

The following matters are among those which should be considered in deciding whether a venture is worthwhile, and should be thought about before seeking permission for a venture to go ahead. The Head, who authorises Ventures, will consider each of these matters.

- Time involved
- Expense involved
- Educational (or other) value
- Whether the venture is compulsory (coursework, etc) or voluntary
- Impact on other staff
- Impact on other established ventures
- Impact of missed lessons
- General impact on the School if you take staff away

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<sup>1</sup> This passage refers to a venture which is the responsibility of a single teacher. Where a venture leader is accompanied by other staff and responsible adults he may delegate responsibilities to those others as set out herein, provided always that only a member of staff is nominated as acting venture leader.

## **2.2 Who is involved?**

In planning a venture, it should be remembered that it is not only those who go on the venture who are involved in or affected by it. All of the following are involved and you must consider them in making your preparations.

- Parents, pupils and friends
- Head, governors, Bursar, teaching staff and other adults
- Advisers, home contact and nominated senior member of staff
- Third parties, authorities, press and public
- Providers of activities, accommodation, food and transport

### **2.2a Leadership**

All ventures must have a designated venture leader and if appropriate an assistant leader

Procedures for the organisation of ventures are part of the induction programme for new staff. Nevertheless whatever type of venture is being considered it is important to talk through the scope of the venture with those experienced in organising ventures at the school. The Head keeps a register of ventures organised which records the range of experience of members of staff. He is thus in a good position to give guidance and direction towards those members of staff who have experience in the type of venture being considered.

## **2.3 Lead-in time**

The more ambitious the venture, the longer the lead-in time. For an overseas or even UK residential visit, you should be planning about 12 months ahead.

For day visits, a term ahead is usually sufficient.

Last minute opportunities sometimes arise. Members of staff wishing to take advantage of such an opportunity should raise the matter immediately with the Deputy Head/ EVC and at the earliest Tuesday staff meeting. It is worth noting, however, that other staff may be reluctant to support last minute requests to take pupils out of school and that their views will be considered by the Head when deciding whether or not to authorise a venture. Care will be taken to ensure that no pupils or staff miss an undue amount of class time such that educational progress is impaired.

## **2.4 Getting the go-ahead**

*See organisational flowchart – “Organising A Venture at The Perse Preparatory School” (forms 8.1) for details of what to do and when. Copies of each form*

mentioned below appear in the appendices to these guidelines and are available in the Staff Handbook.

***It is essential to get formal approval from the Head on behalf of the school for a venture to take place, and to make sure the School is aware of all the details of how it will be organized.*** Failure to do so could leave organisers open to personal liability.

***The forms mentioned above should always be used.***

## **2.4a Risk assessments**

A risk assessment form (VRA1) and guidance is in appendix 8.6. Staff who have not carried out a risk assessment should see the Deputy Head/EVC for guidance. It may be appropriate to ask pupils to carry out a risk assessment on the same basis so that they have an awareness of the risks and means of reducing them. Staff should always carry out risk assessments on transportation, activities and accommodation. They must also risk assess the pupils to check if any pupil through special needs, behaviour or medical conditions presents a specific risk that will need to be managed.

Parents should be given copies of the risk assessment for any venture on request.

## **2.5 Keeping people informed**

Communication is one of the keys to organising a successful venture.

### ***All Staff***

Once the outline proposal has been approved by the Head, consult the Deputy Head and/or Educational Visits Coordinator before entering it in the School Diary and signal the venture to all staff at the first possible Tuesday break staff meeting.

### ***Pupils and parents***

Once the detailed proposal has been approved by the EVC, early and unambiguous information must be sent to parents. As much of the following information as possible should be provided to parents at the outset. Information which is not immediately available should be provided as soon as it becomes available:

- Dates
- Educational objectives
- Place
- Departure and return time
- Dress for travel (school dress code or casual?)
- Method of travel and name and phone number of travel company – if appropriate
- Names of staff in charge of visit and specify the venture leader
- The size of group and level of supervision including any 'remote supervision'.
- Details of insurance cover provided by the school – if appropriate (see Section 5)
- Details of accommodation

- Details of activities and how risks will be managed
- Away address(es) and telephone number(s) for contact
- Budget. (see Section 3)
- Consent form. (see Section 2.7)
- Venture leader's mobile telephone number
- Home contact name and telephone number (see Section 2.7)
- Clothing and equipment needed
- What pupils should take with them
- What pupils should NOT take with them and what they should NOT bring back
- The appropriate level of pocket money to be taken by each pupil
- Passport and visa requirements (if appropriate)
- Immunisation requirements (if appropriate)
- Clear and unambiguous statement of expectations of pupil's conduct and sanctions to be imposed. (see Section 4)

Where applications to participate in a venture are invited, written acknowledgement of the applications and of their success or failure must be given.

Parents must be updated at regular intervals in the lead up to a venture. Changes to arrangements or costs (for more details of the latter, see Section 3) must be notified to parents as soon as they are known. An evening presentation can be a good way of communicating with parents.

***Accompanying staff and other adults briefing*** - all staff and adults involved in the venture should meet beforehand to discuss potential dangers, concerns about any pupil participants, and means of minimising risk as a result of the risk assessment carried out by the venture leader (**Form VRA1**). The same adults should also discuss the conduct of the venture, and agree what they will and won't allow and the sanctions to be used (see Section 4). It is vital that a consistent approach to health and safety, and conduct and discipline is taken by all concerned before briefing the pupils, and throughout the venture.

***Pupil's briefing*** - in the pupil's briefing the checklist for pupils going on a venture **Form TFF** should be issued and gone through with special emphasis on:-

- Behavioural expectations. (see Section 4)
- Potential dangers and means of minimising risk.

Pupils should know at all times who is responsible for them and whom to approach for help if necessary.

## **Volunteers – on school ventures**

**Supervised Volunteers** – one-off occasions, **not involving overnight** supervision – a CRB check is **not** required. Adults helping with an outing, parents evening, fundraising event are not required to complete any checks providing they are supervised.

**Unsupervised Volunteers** – all the checks that would ordinarily be carried out for staff apply to such volunteers. The following must be completed before the volunteer is allowed to participate in the venture: an enhanced CRB check (including a check of List 99/the ISA barred lists), 2 references, an informal interview with the Deputy

Head (of which a written record is kept), a check on the volunteer's full employment history and a health check.

**Overnight Volunteers** – require a CRB check, 2 references and informal interview with the Deputy Head (of which a written record is kept) before they are allowed to participate on the venture

Unsupervised and Overnight Volunteers must be included in the schools central register of appointments. In order to complete the necessary checks, staff must ensure they alert Isabel Allen, Deputy Head and Educational Visits Coordinator to any volunteers they intend on using. These regulations apply to partners, spouses, other family relatives. The CRB check and references can take some time to obtain so advance warning is essential. Volunteers who have not been checked will not be allowed to accompany pupils on overnight trips or work in an unsupervised capacity.

## **Venture Form V2**

At least 7 days before any residential or overseas venture, the Venture Leader must arrange to meet with the Educational Visits Coordinator to complete Venture Form V2. The Venture Leader must come to the meeting with paper copies of all the relevant documentation (consent forms and/or Excel Spreadsheet of consents from the on-line consent form procedure), the up-to-date VRA1 (Risk Assessment) and up-to-date Venture Form V1. Once the Venture Form V2 has been completed and signed, the Venture Leader must upload it to the relevant SharePoint site.

## **2.6 Staffing ratios, use of voluntary adult supervisors and supervision**

There are different guidelines for staffing ratios for different activities and they are shown in Appendix 1. Factors such as the age of the pupils should be taken into account as well as the type of activity. The final ratio must be agreed with the Deputy Head/Educational Visits Coordinator.

Members of staff accompanying their children or related children under the age of 18 years cannot be included in the staffing ratios.

Although other adults may act as supervisors, at least one adult on the venture must be a member of staff. If there are two coaches then a member of staff must be on each coach. Other adult supervisors may have sole supervision of small groups of students for short periods of time provided that they have the means to contact a member of staff who is close at hand at all times. All adult supervisors must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. These should be put in writing and include reference to any pupils who may require closer than usual supervision. Volunteer adult supervisors must have been vetted through the Criminal Records Bureau.

Only the Bursar can arrange for vetting to take place and he should be approached with the details of any proposed voluntary adult helper **two months** before the start

of any venture, in order to allow enough time for the CRB to respond.

On all ventures the venture leader should establish rendezvous points and tell pupils what to do if they become separated from the group. A headcount should take place at regular intervals during the day. Uniform (see Section 4) aids recognition.

## **2.7 Contact**

Each venture requires:

- a senior member of staff not present on the venture to be nominated to help deal with any emergency. The senior member of staff should never be related to any of the adults or children on the venture
- a home contact, which may or may not be the same person as the nominated senior member of staff, who will know the movements of the party and the best way of getting in touch with them for the purpose of conveying important information

The home contact and senior member of staff (if different) must have a full list of all personnel on the venture, including contact numbers for next of kin while the venture is on (may be different from usual if parents are also away).

It is essential that parents, the School's home contact and the nominated senior member of staff know how to get hold of the venture leader. To this end, the venture leader should have a mobile phone or borrow one of the School's mobile phones. If you are travelling abroad, make sure that the international bar is removed.

## **2.8 Consent forms**

### ***Consent Forms are necessary***

- To demonstrate that you have approached parents and obtained their permission for their children to take part in the venture and its activities.
- To demonstrate that you have given parents all the necessary information about the venture, e.g. points of contact, travel arrangements etc.
- To demonstrate that you have considered factors, which may affect the welfare of the children, e.g. asked for dietary and medical details etc.
- To demonstrate that you have approached parents and obtained their permission for Venture Leaders or other members of staff on the Venture to administer medication(s) for minor ailments (as listed on the Consent Form) and to administer first aid should the need arise
- To demonstrate that you have approached parents and obtained their permission for Venture Leaders or other members of staff on the Venture to consent to the giving of any urgent medical or surgical treatment to a child which is considered necessary by medical authorities during the visit.

All the items listed below should appear on the Consent Form of which there should be two copies signed by the parents, one to be returned to the venture leader, and one for the parents to keep. A pro forma including a suitable form of words for parent's consent is available from the Prep Office. It can be customised for your venture. A copy of a consent form for a UK venture and one for an overseas venture (**Form TFE**) are included in the forms and appendices attached to this document. You need the parent to supply:

- Signed consent to the venture and its activities.
- Medical or dietary details of their children including details of any pre-existing conditions which will need to be notified to the school's insurers, and notification of any activities in which they may not participate\*.
- Contact address and phone number of next of kin (who will be contactable during the period of the venture)\*.
- Name and telephone number of pupil's doctor. Details if the child is registered with a private medical scheme\*.
- Acknowledgement that anyone who breaks the code of conduct (see section 4) for the venture is liable to be sent home at the parents' expense.
- Acknowledgement of the risks involved in the venture and its activities.
- Passport number.\*

\*Information marked \* is only needed on long ventures. For most day ventures the home address and medical details which are held at school are sufficient.

If the venture is within the school day and within the Cambridge area then the abridged local ventures form is sufficient.

**The consent form must be approved by the Deputy Head/EVC before being sent to parents.**

**The venture leader must inform the Bursar's PA of the name of any pupil with a pre-existing medical condition along with details of the particular condition well before the venture takes place.**

## **2.9 Use of travel companies and other providers**

This is general guidance. More specific guidance can be found in later sections dealing with particular types of venture.

### ***Travel companies***

Before entering into an agreement with a travel company, the bursary must undertake the following.

- Check that the company is either bonded (ABTA, ATOL) or is a member of a recognised umbrella organisation (IATO).
- Ask for a copy and check the validity of the company's own liability insurance.
- In the case of a company being used for the first time, the bursary will ask for the names of two or more of their customers, and then ask those customers for references. If the references are inadequate, the company should not be used.

- Ask travel companies to provide copies of risk assessments for accommodation venues

### ***Services or activities companies and independent instructors***

Before entering into an agreement with a company offering services or activities or an independent instructor, the bursary must undertake the following.

- Check that they are properly licensed to deliver the services and activities which it offers.
- Check that their staff are properly qualified to deliver the services and activities which the company offers.
- Ask for a copy and check the validity of their own liability insurance.
- In the case of a company or an independent instructor being used for the first time, the bursary will ask for the name of two or more of their customers, and then ask those customers for a reference. If the references are inadequate, the company or independent instructor should not be used.
  - Ask for copies of the risk assessments for all relevant activities to be carried out.

## **2.10 Residential visits**

There are additional factors to consider in a residential visit:

- An exploratory visit should be made by venture leaders who are to lead a group in a location that is not familiar to them. If in the last resort, an exploratory visit is not feasible then the venture leader will need to consider how to complete an adequate assessment of the risks. A minimum measure would be to obtain specific information in writing from the venue, from other schools which have recently visited it, and from local organisations such as tourist boards.
- Suitability of accommodation. Where possible pupils should not be housed in ground floor rooms. Ideally there should be drying and secure storage facilities. Quarters for members of staff must be separate from, but should be next to those for pupils.
- Security of accommodation. You need to reassure yourself about the arrangements to prevent unauthorized visitors. Locks on doors should work in the group's room(s) while access to members of staff must still be available when circumstances demand it.
- Fire provisions – remember that fire regulations are different overseas. Before booking accommodation, the venture leader should confirm that it has fire exits and lifts with inner doors and that it meets local regulations. The fire alarm must be audible throughout the accommodation. Once at the accommodation, the venture leader must make sure that everyone is aware of the lay-out of the accommodation, and its fire precautions and exits.
- Other safety provisions. Heating and ventilation must be appropriate and safe. Balconies should be stable, windows secure and electrical connections safe.
- Once students have been allocated to rooms, staff must visit each room

to confirm that there are no apparent defects (e.g. lights not working, damaged furniture etc). Any deficiencies must be reported to the manager and rectified. If necessary, alternative accommodation must be requested.

Deposits. The venture leader needs to ascertain when planning the venture whether a deposit against damage will be required to be put down.

Is the accommodation run by the travel company or is it contracted to the company and run by the owners (who may not speak English)?

Make sure that you take an inventory of any damaged items in the rooms at the start of the venture, and make the manager aware of them, to avoid being charged for damage which your group has not caused.

Multi day residential ventures need to have built into their organisation a clear structure of when staff are "on duty" and when they are "off duty", i.e. all staff on a venture are responsible for pupils but there will be times when staff need recreational time. Members of staff have a duty of care throughout the venture and therefore must not engage in behaviour such as the excessive consumption of alcohol which would compromise that duty of care. The duty member of staff should always be alcohol-free.

## **2.11 Adventurous Activities (See DfES HSPEV para 157-180)**

As a result of the Lyme Bay disaster, many centres providing adventurous activities for young people (under 18) must carry a licence to prove that they have been inspected by the Adventurous Activities Licensing Authority. The list of licensed centres is available on the AALA website. Ask for a copy of the licence and check its validity before making even a provisional booking.

The following activities need a licence (for more detailed descriptions of the activities see DfES HSPEV para 161):

- Caving
- Climbing
- Trekking
- Water sports

The need to be licensed applies to centres operating entirely or partly within this country. It does not apply to a centre, which caters only for adults. Nor does it apply if you are running the activity yourself purely for pupils of the School, as long as you are not operating for profit. However, if members of another school are taking part in the activity then you do need a licence.

The possession of a licence by an activity centre does not absolve the venture leader from carrying out the usual checks for residential accommodation (see Section 2.12), health and safety, etc. Ultimate responsibility for a venture involving adventurous activity is the same as for any venture and remains with the venture leader and other staff.

While some activities (see above) need licensing, it follows that some other activities and providers of activities do not require licensing. If proposing to use a non-licensable provider, the group leader should obtain assurances in writing from the provider that:

- risks have been assessed and that the provider's staff are competent to instruct and lead pupils of the group's age range on the activity. (Competence could be demonstrated by holding the relevant National Governing Body (NGB) award where it exists or through successful participation in a NGB approved in-house scheme);
- the equipment is appropriate and that its safe condition is checked before each use;
- operating procedures conform to the guidelines of the NGB for the activity where this is appropriate;
- clear management of safety systems is in place;
- there is appropriate provision for first aid;
- there are emergency procedures, and that the group will have a fire drill as soon as possible on arrival at the provider's base.
- In the case of a company you are using for the first time, ask for the name of two or more of their customers, and then ask those customers for references. If the references are inadequate, do not use the company.

If running a school-led adventure activity, the requirements are similar. The venture leader needs to be sure that:

- the activity leader and other supervising members of staff are competent to act as leaders and/or instructors of pupils in the activity. If any of the pupils are novices, remember to take this into consideration. Competences should be demonstrated by holding the relevant NGB awards where it exists. The relevant NGB can advise on this;
- the group leader is competent in safety procedures and the planning of adventurous visits;
- an appropriate risk assessment has been completed;
- the supervision will be appropriate;
- there is adequate first aid provision, expertise and equipment within the group;

- the emergency procedures include activity- specific measures and that supervisors are competent to carry them out;
- the equipment is appropriate, safe and in good condition;
- every pupil is suited to the activity and is properly prepared and equipped.

For all types of ventures involving adventurous activities, an exploratory visit should be made by venture leaders who are to instruct or lead a group in an outdoor activity in a location that is not familiar to them. If in the last resort, an exploratory visit is not feasible then the venture leader will need to consider how to complete an adequate assessment of the risks. A minimum measure would be to obtain specific information in writing from the venue, from other schools which have recently visited it, and from local organisations such as tourist boards.

## **2.12 Further Specific Guidance from the DfES**

**Coastal visits** - (See DfES HSPEV para 181-182)

**Swimming in the sea or other natural waters** - (See DfES HSPEV para 183-186)

Accidents involving water based e.g. swimming activities account for the highest proportion of accidents on ventures. It is therefore essential that if any water activities are going to take place that parents are made aware of this and the safeguards that are in place to reduce risk. Any water-based activities should be talked through with the DH) before they are put into a venture itinerary. Staff should also take particular care to monitor conditions once they are on the ground and take appropriate action relating to the conditions they encounter.

**Swimming pools** - (See DfES HSPEV para 187-189)

See above regarding the risks of water based activities.

**Farm visits** - (See DfES HSPEV para 190-193)

## **2.13 Documents**

### ***Passports***

If the venture is abroad, it is essential that the venture leader asks parents to check pupils' passports at least 8 weeks before departure and hand them in to the venture leader at least four weeks beforehand. Parents should NOT FORGET to check not only that the passports are valid at the time of checking but also that they will be valid for the duration of the venture. Some countries require there to be at least six months outstanding validity on a passport.

### ***Visas***

All parents must be made aware of the visa requirements for EU passport holders.

All parents must also be made aware from the outset that non-EU passport holders must make their own enquiries concerning visas to the appropriate embassy.

### ***Vaccinations***

The venture leader should find out whether vaccination is necessary and, if so, ensure that all members of the group receive it in good time. It is also important to check whether the country to be visited requires proof of vaccination.

### ***European Health Insurance Card***

The European Health insurance card replaced the E111 form from 1 January 2006. This allows the holder to access free or reduced cost medical treatment within the EU and sometimes outside it (there are some non EU countries which have reciprocal health agreements with the UK). It is essential that all members of the venture carry a valid European Health Insurance Card. Further details about the card, including online application can be found at [www.dh.gov.uk](http://www.dh.gov.uk).

### ***General***

**The venture leader must carry the following documents in a water proof bag, with a set of copies carried by another member of staff.**

- Parental consent letters
- Travel tickets
- Passports
- Visas (if applicable)
- A copy of all passport numbers
- School disaster plan
- Contact details of school
- Copies of a list of all group members
- Local hospital / medical service location
- All insurance/ administrative forms from Travel Company if used.

**The venture leader must leave the following documents at School with the Deputy Head or Educational Visits Coordinator**

- Itinerary and contact telephone numbers
- A list of group members and their details
- Contact names, addresses of parents and next of kin
- Copies of parental consent forms
- Copies of all travel documentation
- Copy of contract with centre/ hotel, if appropriate
- Copies of all insurance policies

## 2.14 First aid and medical

First Aid should form part of the venture risk assessment (**Form VRA**) and one member of staff or voluntary helper must be designated as the person in charge of first aid arrangements.

There is a small first-aid bag (stored in the office at School) which should be taken on ventures. The bag contains

- first aid kit
- towel, dettol and wipes etc for travel sickness
- up-to-date address list of all families as in consent forms

Make sure that the contents of the rucksack are checked before departure, and that you notify the Secretary on your return if you use any of its contents during a venture.

There are very many pupils with asthma or other allergies these days: **check that they have any necessary inhalers before departure**

Further advice on first aid appears in Appendix 2 to this document

## 2.15 Other Considerations

Venture Leaders should, where possible, take a camera on all Ventures. This is especially important for Residential and Overseas Ventures.

# 3. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

## 3.1 Budgeting

A budget must be prepared for each venture this is included in the T1 form and should be submitted to the EVC in the early stages of preparation for a venture (see Procedural Flowchart). The Venture Budget should be considered to be an 'open' document which is available to parents. In the case of residential ventures, the STBF should be sent to parents as an accompaniment to their early information letter. Budgets for residential ventures inevitably require more detail than those for day ventures. Much of what follows refers to residential ventures.

Members of staff preparing a budget are encouraged to seek the advice of the office or the BURSARY concerning any financial matter on which they are unclear.

Expenses to be considered:

- Travel (including School to/from (air)port)
- Accommodation
- Foreign taxes levied on departure
- Meals (not provided with accommodation)

- Activities, entrance & other fees
- First aid and medical supplies
- Administration (post, 'phone, photocopying etc)
- Insurance
- Equipment (hired and bought)
- Contingency
- Gratuities for coach drivers etc
- Hospitality gifts to hosts etc

Income to be considered:

- Payments by pupils
- Payments by members of staff
- Payments by other adults
- Other sources of funding

It may be appropriate to charge a non-refundable deposit for some ventures to cover costs that will already have been incurred where a pupil withdraws from a venture. Parents must be informed of the non refundable element of the deposit from the outset.

Parents must be given from the outset a budgeted cost figure which is as close as possible to the final figure. This can only be achieved by accurate budgeting. If in doubt, err slightly on the high side. It is better to put in a higher contingency amount, which can later be reduced, than to have to apply late surcharges. In the unfortunate and undesirable event of having to apply a late surcharge, the venture leader must liaise with the Head before contacting parents.

It is not permitted to plan to make a 'profit' on a Venture. If there are surplus funds at the end of a venture (as a result of overbudgeting), then the whole surplus should be returned to parents as a refund

Parents should be given enough time to prepare financially for the venture. The greater the cost of the venture, the more notice parents need to receive. The total budgeted costs and when instalment payments will fall due must be stated.

An early decision must be made about how many adults are needed to accompany the venture (based on the estimated number of pupils), and whether they should make any financial contribution towards it. All other adults should pay the full per person cost. The respective number of adults travelling free, at subsidized cost and at full cost must be evident in the budget.

### **3.2 Accounting arrangements and accounts**

The default method for collecting payments for Ventures is via the on-line system ParentPay. Payment can be accepted by cheque if necessary but parents should be discouraged from doing so. All money must be put through the office, who will set up a “contra” account for the venture within the Preparatory School’s bank account. You must not open a bank account for the venture and a personal account must never be used for venture funds. It is essential from the auditing point of view and for staff protection that all monies (both payments in and payments out) go through the office.

- a) At least 3 working days before parents are requested for payment the Bursary must be informed of details of the venture using the form available on Sharepoint at <http://pmsmoss01/SiteDirectory/groups/staff/staffteam/ParentPay/default.aspx>. The Bursary will then set up the service and allocate it to the appropriate pupils. Payment requests must not be sent out until the Bursary has confirmed by e-mail that the service is available on ParentPay.
- b) It is preferred that all payments be made via ParentPay. However any cheques from parents must be made payable to "The Perse School" and handed in by the venture leader to the office accompanied by a note which shows
  - the payer(s) of the cheque
  - the pupil or other person for whom the payment is being made
  - exactly what the payment is for (e.g. stage payment 2).

Cheques should be paid into the office swiftly after receipt – delaying processing of cheques represents poor financial management. Payments by parents in cash should be discouraged. If a cheque is accidentally made payable to a member of staff rather than the School, it must be returned to the payer with a request that it be replaced by a cheque made out to the School.

- c) Invoices and pro-formas which need paying must be passed to the office with a request for payment which should detail when the payment needs to be made by. Please make sure that invoices are passed to the office as soon as possible after receipt.
- d) Cash, currency and travellers cheques should be ordered through the office in sufficient time - normally 5 working days – before they are needed. All unused cash and currency must be paid into the office immediately on return from the venture. Travellers’ cheques must be returned to the bank as soon as possible and the bank receipt for them must be handed into the office as soon as possible thereafter.

The venture leader or another member of staff appointed by the venture leader must maintain a cash book during the venture in which to record all payments made (and any income received). Each entry should be numbered and supported by a voucher numbered in the same way. The cash book and supporting vouchers, which should be reconciled to the cash, currency and travellers cheques taken out and returned, must be handed in to the office at the end of the venture.

At the end of the venture, accounts must be prepared and made available to parents and any others who have contributed financially to the venture. The Assistant Secretary will advise and assist in the preparation of these accounts. The Assistant Secretary and Head must approve the accounts before they are made more widely available.

### **3.3 Pocket money**

Parents like to be advised how much money their child should take for personal expenditure and how it should be carried – e.g. by the children themselves or by staff to dispense. All accommodation, travel, food, group activities, etc (see expenses under 3.1) must be covered in the budget and the amount of pocket money should not therefore need to be high.

## **4. CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINARY MATTERS**

### **4.1 Agreeing a code of conduct, dress and discipline**

Expected conduct, dress code and disciplinary measures to be taken in the event of a breach of conduct must be clearly explained to and understood by all participants and their parents before a venture commences.

All staff and supervising adults involved in the venture should meet beforehand to discuss the conduct of the venture, and agree what they will and won't allow and the sanctions to be used. It is vital that a consistent approach to conduct and discipline is taken by all concerned.

The agreed code of conduct and discipline should be explained to pupils as well as being presented to them on paper.

It is essential in the literature sent out to parents that the venture leader makes clear the standards of behaviour to be expected and how the venture is to be conducted in general, together with the sanctions to be used. This must include information to the effect that any behaviour that is deemed unacceptable by the venture leader can result in the pupil being sent home at the expense of the parents.

The Consent Form must refer to the fact that the parents or guardians have read these details and consent to them.

### **4.2 Dress code**

This must be a decision for the venture leader, depending on the nature of the activity. For most day ventures and visits school uniform should normally be worn. If casual or working clothes are worn, school rules concerning “ornamentation” etc still apply.

### **4.3 General Behaviour**

Pupils are expected to behave with common sense, courtesy and due consideration for others at all times. Others include other party members, adults and members of the public. Venture leaders should be aware that high spirits can be interpreted by members of the public as loutish behaviour.

### **4.4 Smoking, drugs and alcohol**

School rules on smoking, drugs and alcohol apply on ventures.

**Alcohol** - It is important that staff are aware of the laws relating to alcohol in this country and other countries visited. Pupils and staff involved in a venture must uphold the law of the land in which they find themselves, even if this is contrary to the expectations of more liberal parents.

### **4.5 Bullying**

On residential ventures, where pupils are sharing rooms, sometimes in small numbers, and where they may have some unsupervised free time, opportunity for bullying can arise. It is important to be aware of the increased risk of the problem on residential ventures and, if it arises, to deal with it immediately. The school anti-bullying policy applies at all times on all ventures.

### **4.6 Sanctions**

On day ventures, normal school sanctions apply. On longer visits, it is important that the sanctions (previously agreed, see Section 4.1) are well-defined and realistic, appropriate to the severity of the offence and as immediate in implementation as possible. Many ventures are intended to be social as well as educational, and punishments which are too drawn out can unnecessarily detract from the enjoyment of them.

### **4.7 Sending home from a venture as a disciplinary measure**

This is a difficult thing to do, especially from overseas, even though a pupil's behaviour may merit it and the parents are aware of its possibility (see Section 4.1).

Before taking action, all possible efforts must be made to contact the nominated senior member of staff. It should ideally always be the nominated senior member of staff who makes the decision to send home a pupil. If the nominated senior member of staff cannot be contacted, the venture leader must make the appropriate decision.

A pupil being sent home from overseas, will need to be accompanied by a member of staff to the overseas port / airport. A pupil must not be sent home until arrangements have been made for the parents to meet the pupil at the home port / airport.

#### **4.8 Searching rooms and personal belongings**

Staff and other adults are not allowed to search rooms and/or personal belongings unless they have strong reasons for doing so. If these reasons arise, the venture leader should, if possible, first contact the nominated senior member of staff. As above, if the senior member of staff cannot be reached at that time, or the effectiveness of a search depends on its immediacy, then the venture leader must take the decision. Any search should be made with the pupils present.

#### **4.9 Illicit Materials**

In some countries items such as fireworks, pornography, knives etc, which are illegal in the UK, are on sale and pupils may be tempted to buy them. The venture leader must ensure that pupils are aware that UK restrictions on such purchases are maintained by the school at all times.

#### **4.10 Dealing with complaints**

Complaints from the public, officials, hotel owners and others who come into contact with a school group on a venture are always unpleasant, no matter whether they are justifiable or unreasonable. The best way of dealing with them is always to take them seriously and calmly, to note down the details, and then to arrange a meeting between the complainant and the pupils involved with you acting as honest broker. Being scornful of the bearers of an unreasonable complaint will only make things worse, but on the other hand do not take serious complaints which you know to be unfounded lying down. Remember also that sometimes it is politic to put up with a little injustice for the overall benefit of the venture.

### **5. INSURANCE**

#### **5.1 Travel insurance**

The School arranges annual travel insurance which automatically covers ventures where travel insurance is appropriate. The policy inclusions and exclusions are shown below. If you are in any doubt whatsoever whether your venture is included within the School's annual policy, you must raise the matter early on with the Head.

##### ***Insured Persons***

Any adult (aged 18 to 74 years) and any pupil (aged under 18 years) travelling on an educational excursion and normally resident in Great Britain, Northern Ireland, The Isle of Man or The Channel Islands.

### ***Insured Journeys***

Any visit arranged by the insured worldwide.

### ***Main policy benefits***

Medical expenses, public liability, personal liability, personal accident, winter sports, cancellation/curtailment, missed or delayed departure, baggage and money. For more details, including the amount of cover, please see Appendix 3.

### ***Excluded activities***

Flying except air travel, motor competitions, mountaineering or cliff or rock climbing (normally involving the use of ropes)..

Venture leaders must remember to advise insurers of any pre-existing medical condition of any of the travelling group and to establish whether the condition is covered by the insurance. They must also make sure that parents (or a member of staff) who are affected by any such exclusion are notified of the fact.

A copy of the travel insurance schedule (whether the School's scheme or another's) must be given to the parents of each pupil before departure. A copy should also be part of the package of materials left for the 'Home contact' and senior member of staff.

## **5.2 Employers liability insurance**

This covers injury to individual members of staff where there is any negligence on the part of the school.

Cover applies anywhere in the world up to a maximum aggregate claim limit of £25 million.

## **5.3 Public and products liability insurance**

This covers injury to members of the public (*who include parents and pupils*) and damage to their property where there is negligence on the part of the School. Cover is provided for claims brought against the School and each individual member of staff.

Products liability cover (which is where the claim is against something supplied by the School) is worldwide up to a maximum aggregate claim limit of £25 million in any one year. Public liability cover (which is where the claim is against the actions of an individual or individuals) is also worldwide but up to a maximum claim limit of £25 million for any one claim – i.e. with no limit on the number of claims in a year.

The policy covers both damages for loss awarded by a court and legal costs incurred in defending a claim. Fines and penalties are not covered as this would be against the general public interest.

## **5.4 Personal accident insurance**

This policy provides lump sum benefits payable to individual members of staff caused through accident.

The policy operates all year round and therefore includes ventures and depending on the type of loss, the benefit payable ranges between £6,000 and £200,000.

Death is excluded as are the following activities:

Horse, motor or motorcycle racing, mountaineering, aviation and winter sports.  
Activities while under the influence of intoxicating liquor or drugs  
Suicide or Intentional Self Injury  
Pregnancy or Childbirth  
Pre-existing defects  
War Risks

For more details, including the full amount of cover, please see Appendix 4 and Appendix 5.

## **5.5 Professional liability insurance**

This policy provides cover for claims which are made against the School or its staff, and arise out of a negligent act which **does not** necessarily result in physical injury or damage. Such claims can be brought by members of the public with whom the School has a contractual relationship (including parents and pupils) and could arise out of an issue such as failed expectation or mis-tuition.

If a claim against the School or its staff alleges injury to a person or damage to property, then it will be covered under the Employers' Liability or Public and Products Liability policies, outlined above.

## **5.6 Further insurance matters**

Any further enquiries about insurance should be addressed to the Bursar

# **6. ACCIDENTS AND EMERGENCIES**

## **6.1 General**

Members of staff in charge of pupils during a visit have a duty of care to make sure that the pupils are safe and healthy. They also have a common law duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would. Members of staff should not hesitate to act in an emergency and to take life-saving action in an extreme situation.

Emergency procedures are an essential part of planning a school visit.

If an accident happens, the priorities are to:

- Assess the situation;
- Safeguard the uninjured members of the group;
- Attend to the casualty;
- Inform the emergency services and everyone who needs to know of the incident.

## **6.2 Who should take charge in an emergency?**

The venture leader should usually take immediate charge in an emergency, and should ensure that emergency procedures are put in place and that back up cover is arranged. If a tour operator is being used, then the venture leader should liaise with its representative.

The nominated senior member of staff must be contacted as soon as possible. The nominated senior member of staff provides the link between the venture leader and the School in an emergency and must have previously been given all necessary information about the venture. The nominated senior member of staff will, depending on the scale and severity of the emergency, establish an emergency incident team at the School and will usually handle communications with parents, other concerned parties and the media.

### **6.3 Emergency procedures framework**

All those involved in the venture, including supervisors, pupils and their parents, should be informed of who will take charge in an emergency, who will provide back up cover and what they are expected to do in an emergency.

### **6.4 Emergency procedures framework during the venture**

If an emergency occurs on a venture the main factors to consider include:

- Establish the nature and extent of the emergency as quickly as possible;
- Ensure that all the group are safe and looked after;
- Establish the names of any casualties and get immediate medical attention for them;
- Ensure that all group members who need to know are aware of the incident and that all group members are following the emergency procedures;
- Ensure that a member of staff accompanies casualties to hospital and that the rest of the group are adequately supervised at all times and kept together;
- Notify the police if necessary
- Notify the British Embassy/Consulate if an emergency occurs abroad;
- Inform the nominated senior member of staff. The telephone number of the nominated senior member of staff should be available at all times during the visit;
- In the event that the nominated senior member of staff is unreachable, then the home contact should be informed and asked to keep trying to contact the nominated member of staff, thereby enabling the venture leader and other accompanying staff to concentrate their efforts at the scene of the emergency;
- Details of the incident to pass on to the school should include: nature, date and time of incident; location of incident; names of casualties and details of their injuries; names of others involved so that parents can be reassured; action taken so far; action yet to be taken (and by whom); any change or addition to contact telephone numbers already advised;
- In case of an accident or serious illness initiate all reasonable attempts to contact the relevant parents as soon as possible.
- The nominated senior member of staff will notify insurers;
- Ascertain landline telephone numbers for future calls. Mobile phones, though useful, can be subject to technical difficulties, and should not replace usual communication procedures;

- Write down accurately and as soon as possible all relevant facts and witness details and preserve any vital evidence;
- Keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident and take photographs where appropriate;
- Complete an accident report form as soon as possible. The nominated senior member of staff will provide the form;
- No-one in the group should speak to the media. Names of those involved in the incident should not be given to the media as this causes distress to their families. Media enquiries should be referred to the nominated senior member of staff at the School;
- No-one in the group should discuss legal liability with other parties. Furthermore, under no circumstances should anyone make a statement to the press or any admission of liability for any occurrence other than on legal advice. You should make a written record of oral legal advice – including name, address, date and time. Statements to the Police, HM Revenue & Customs or other officials should only be made in the presence of a lawyer, appointed by the School or its insurers, and on his/her advice. This applies equally to oral and to written statements
- Following an incident, photographs that are taken, tape recordings and written statements and notes become evidence. Great care should be taken over accuracy and record-keeping, in particular, names, timing and date. Photographs should, if possible, record height of lens and approximate position on a sketch plan.

## 6.5 Emergency procedures framework for school base

The nominated senior member of staff will be aware of the School's Critical Incident Plan and will act accordingly.

## 7. USE OF MINIBUSES AND COACHES

### 7.1 Minibus travel in UK

By UK law, all minibuses and coaches must have forward facing seats, each fitted with a seat-belt. ***It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that the seat belts are fastened.***

Seat belts in minibuses must be anchored in the correct position to the structure of the vehicle or to the seat if the seat has been designed and built to carry a belt. The seat itself must also be securely anchored to the structure of the vehicle.

A minibus equipped to carry more than eight passengers plus the driver may only be driven by a person over 21 with a provisional D1 entitlement (which is included automatically only on licences gained before 1997). The minibus in question must carry a Small Bus Permit, issued by the traffic office. The permit allows community buses and school buses to operate and to charge passengers for the venture, as long as it is a closed-door tour and the passengers are members of the organisation, which runs the bus. This applies only to UK.

If you passed your test after 1997, you will not have the provisional D1 entitlement, and will need to take and pass both theory and practical tests for D1. The tests are not easy, as they are the tests for professional bus drivers.

In line with most other schools, the School requires all drivers of minibuses to undergo and pass a regular training programme. The School's programme is run under the auspices of Cambridgeshire County Council. The training programme excludes people over 65 years of age. Members of staff may not drive minibuses on behalf of the School unless they have passed the School's approved test within the last four years.

A driver of a minibus must check that:

- All passengers are wearing seat-belts
- The vehicle is in a road-worthy condition
- They are insured to drive it
- If towing a trailer, there must be a side door
- It carries a fire extinguisher
- They know where the fuel cut-off switch is (usually the ignition key)
- They know what to do in an emergency
- They do not drive when undertaking medication which may affect their judgement
- They take into account the effects of a working day (see *Drivers' hours/journey lengths*)

Minibuses are licensed for a maximum laden weight which, you will see from the chart below, leaves little room for luggage.

	LDV
	<u>Kg</u>
Maximum laden weight	3500
<i>less unladen weight</i>	<u>2240</u>
	1260
<i>less assumed weight of 17 passengers x 65kg*</i>	<u>1105</u>
Available weight for luggage	<u>155</u>

The chart assumes an average weight per person of 65kg (10 stone). Average weight should be adjusted according to the age of the pupils being driven in the minibus.

Drivers of minibuses must take care over the amount of luggage being carried with a full passenger load.

### ***Drivers' hours/journey lengths***

In order to reduce driver fatigue and distraction, and minimize the consequent risk of accidents the following instructions, which are in line with EU regulations, regarding driving times must be observed.

- No-one should drive a minibus if such driving were to mean that their cumulative working hours, including non-driving time, would exceed 13 in any 24 (e.g. a person starting work at 9.00 am must not drive after 10.00 pm unless a complete break from work has been taken in that period. For teachers, working hours under these instructions include all time when they have a duty of supervision.
- After 4 ½ hours continuous driving, a driver must take a break of at least 45 minutes. This may be replaced by breaks of at least 15 minutes, totalling 45 minutes, taken over a 4 ½ hours driving period.
- The presence of two drivers is desirable but it is recognized that this may not always be practical. Staff should therefore use their discretion in this, bearing in mind the size and age of the group being conveyed and the distance to be travelled.

## **7.2 Minibuses Abroad**

The Small Bus Permit is not recognised by EU countries, and therefore if you have a bus bigger than nine seats including driver, you are not regarded as being licensed for it, unless you carry a full D1 entitlement, which means taking the aforementioned tests. The School does not permit members of staff to drive minibuses overseas unless they have a full D1 entitlement.

Drivers' hours must be adhered to when driving a minibus abroad and daily tachograph records must be kept.

## **7.3 Coach Hire**

When a coach is hired, the venture leader should ask to see insurance documents and the driver's licence. This is often impractical. The School's requirement is that members of staff booking a coach must ask the coach company to confirm that its drivers are insured and have the correct licence for driving the vehicle to be hired, and that the coach company itself has the appropriate public service vehicle (PSV) operators' licence.

In the United Kingdom, it is also the venture leader's duty to check that the coach has seat belts and is, in their opinion, generally safe. Pupils must be instructed to wear the seat belts provided. If there are no seat belts then the coach must not be used.

Overseas, it is often difficult and sometimes impossible to find coaches which have seat belts. In planning an overseas venture, venture leaders must make sure that they advise parents that it may not be possible to use coaches with seat belts. They should, however, make every reasonable effort to secure a coach which does have seat belts, and, if it does, ensure that pupils are instructed to use them