



SAFETY ADVICE DESIGNED TO KEEP YOUR STAFF SAFE AND YOUR BUSINESS COMPLIANT



Trips and Outdoor Learning Activities

Educational trips have clear benefits for pupils, and large numbers of successful visits and outdoor learning activities take place each year

Misunderstandings about the application of Health and Safety law may, in some cases, discourage schools/colleges and teachers from organising such trips. These misunderstandings stem from a wide range of issues but may include frustrations about paperwork, fears of prosecution if the trip goes wrong and the belief that a teacher will be sued if a child is injured

Main Points

HSE fully recognises that learning outside the classroom helps to bring the curriculum to life, it provides deeper subject learning and increases self-confidence. It also helps pupils develop their risk awareness and prepares them for their future working lives.

Striking the right balance between protecting pupils from risk and allowing them to learn from educational trips has been a challenge, but getting this balance right is essential for realising all these benefits in practice.

Striking the right balance means that:-

- Those running trips understand their roles, are supported, and are competent to lead or take part in them
- Focus is on the real risks when planning trips
- The real risks are managed during the trip
- Learning opportunities are experienced to the full

Striking the right balance does not mean that:-

- Every aspect is set out in copious paperwork that acts as a security blanket for those organising the trip
- Detailed risk assessment and recording procedures aimed at higher risk adventure activities are used when planning lower risk educational risks
- Mistakes and accidents will not happen and
- All risks must be eliminated

What staff should expect:-

Teachers should expect to have procedures that encourage participation, are proportionate to the level of risk and avoid bureaucracy

Arrangements for trips should ensure that:-

- Risk assessment focuses attention on real risks – not risks that are trivial and fanciful
- Proportionate systems are in place – so that trips presenting lower risk activities are quick and easy to organise, and higher risk activities (such as those involving climbing, caving or water based activities) are properly planned and assessed.
- Those planning the trips are properly supported – so that staff can readily check if they have taken sufficient precautions or whether they should do more

Key message – Those running school trips need to focus on the risks and the benefits to people – not the paperwork

It is important that those running educational trips act responsible by:-

- Putting sensible precautions in place, and making sure these work in practice
- Knowing when and how to apply contingency plans where they are necessary
- Heeding advice and warnings from others, for example those with local knowledge or specialist expertise (especially in respect of higher risk activities).

HSE has brought prosecutions in rare cases where there was evidence of recklessness or a clear failure to follow sensible precautions, If things go wrong during a trip, provided sensible and proportionate steps have been taken, it is highly unlikely that there would be any breach of health and safety law involved, or that it would be in the public interest for HSE to bring a prosecution.

Talk to Atlas about Safety Management for your business

📞 01823 299580 ✉ info@atlas-sm.co.uk 🌐 www.atlas-sm.co.uk

Atlas Safety Management Ltd.

Registered Office: Unit Z1 Westpark, Chelston, Wellington, Taunton, TA21 9AD. Company No: 9470014.

