

Educational Visits and Placements Policy

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| Reviewed by: | Local Governors |
| Frequency of policy review: | 3 years |
| Last Reviewed: | 1st December 2024 |
| By Dan Sydes | |
| Ratified by Local Board of Governors on: | 11th December 2024 |
| By Derek Marshall | |
| Next Review Date: | 1 December 2027 |

Version History

| Date of review | Summary of Changes |
|-------------------|--|
| 1st December 2024 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • added version history • reformatted to house style • spelling/grammar updates • added process section |
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Introduction

Educational visits and placements have enormous potential for enriching the NE Futures UTC curriculum and, in some cases, are an essential requirement of courses. Such enterprises, though demanding, can be enjoyable experiences for both students and staff and form an important element of the experience of being at the UTC. It is very important that all educational visits are properly planned and organised and that all staff involved with educational visits take all reasonable steps to ensure that risks

are minimised. This policy has been written with regard to the Department for Education 'Advice on Health and Safety for Schools April 2012'. This document summarises the existing health and safety law relevant to schools and academies, including UTCs and how it affects governing bodies, head teachers and other staff. It covers activities which take place on or off school premises, including school trips and educational visits. Paragraphs 11 and 12 of the Schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010 require Independent Schools to consider the guidance in Health and Safety; Responsibilities and Powers (2001) and Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (HASPEV 1998). This advice replaces that guidance for the purposes of the 2010 regulations.

Definitions

For this policy, the following definitions are made:

- A visit is defined as any occasion when a student or group of students are away from the UTC building, undertaking an activity and under the supervision of a member of staff
- A placement is defined as a repeated visit to a company for the purpose of developing a deeper understanding and developing workplace skills; they may last for part or all day, have any number of repeats and there may or may not be a member of staff from the UTC present on placements
- A trip is defined as an activity away from the UTC which involves one or more overnight stays

This policy pays attention to the following health and safety principles:

- Children should be able to experience a wide range of activities. Health and Safety measures should help them to do this safely, not stop them.
- It is important that children learn to understand and manage the risks that are a normal part of life
- Common sense should be used in assessing and managing the risks of any activity
- Health and safety procedures should always be proportionate to the risks of an activity
- Staff should be given the training they need so they can keep themselves and the children safe and manage risks effectively

A designated member of the senior leadership team has the role of Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC). He/she can give advice about all aspects of trips and visits and will have appropriate training and knowledge of the EVOLVE system. This is an online system for recording, planning and risk assessing trips that is commonly used in educational establishments. He/she has copies of relevant documents from DfE and other agencies. Staff are asked to consult as fully as possible with the EVC before, during, and after a trip, visit or placement. Feedback from trips, visits and placements are an important mechanism for ensuring against future incidents. Staff must complete an EVOLVE Trip Pack for approval from the senior team. The EVC must therefore be notified of all occasions when a student or group of students leave UTC premises, either accompanied by members of staff, to meet members of staff at a prearranged location or to travel alone to visits, trips or placements. This forms a key

part of the duty of care we owe to students. It is not easy to give a definitive list of such out-of-school activities, but examples include trips to employer organisations, museums, galleries and theatres; trips to educational conferences, both in the evenings and at weekends, residential trips such as skiing holidays, and all sports fixtures and sports tours. If staff are in doubt about the nature of a trip or visit, then they should seek the advice of the EVC.

All staff must complete a NE Futures UTC Trip Pack on EVOLVE before departing on a trip, visit or placement. The EVC must also give permission before any trip can take place. After the calendar has been checked for clashes, and after the senior team have been consulted where relevant, the EVC will give approval for 'routine' day trips.

Experienced staff can lead the journey. Newly qualified members of staff will need a more experienced member of staff to share leadership of the trip. Any residential trips or visits likely to have a significant impact on the day-to-day running of the UTC need to be approved by the EVC in consultation with the senior team. Staff must not spend any money or inform students or parents that a trip or visit is going ahead until it has been formally approved.

Procedure

To obey Health and Safety regulations, all trips, visits, events and activities which involve students on or off the school site must be authorised by the Headteacher or Educational Visit Coordinator. To do this staff organising the visit must follow the procedures outlined in the policy. To initiate this process they must speak to the EVC and will be issued with Educational Visit Leader information pack.

Educational Visit Proposal: Staff must complete the Trip pack on EVOLVE. This should include an initial scoping exercise by the person planning the visit. This should be submitted to the EVC at the earliest opportunity and submit to the EVC.

Informing the Governing Body: All Category 3 visits/activities should be shared with the governing body before approval has been granted. This will require the visit leader to submit their Educational Visit Proposal Form to the governing body

Approval: The Headteacher or EVC will inform the visit leader, whether or not the visit, event or activity has been approved. This may require a meeting between the EVC and the Team leader depending on the nature of the visit/activity.

Parental Consent and Key Information: Although parents/carers consent is not necessary for category 1 visits during school times, all parents will be informed of the visit. A signed permission slip for all visits (Categories 2-3 or category 1 outside of school hours) . Any student, who does not return a completed permission slip – along with other requested safeguarding information – prior to the departure, may be withdrawn from the visit. The following key information should also be included as part of the letter/Announcement:

- Destination of visit
- Number of days (including outward and return travel)
- Date/s of visit
- Details of accommodation (where appropriate)
- Aims and objectives of visit

- Time of departure and return – parent / carers must sign to confirm that they will collect their children on return
- The location where the pupils will leave from and return to
- Travel arrangements – mode of transport and travel companies involved
- Appropriate equipment and clothing that students may need. This may be dictated by the weather or environment.
- Details of planned activities
- Breakdown of whole cost (where appropriate) – including a non-refundable deposit Parent / carers should also be advised that refunds will not be given if students are absent due to illness.
- A note referencing that the behaviour policy will still apply to all students whilst on the visit/trip - Disclaimer from the UTC (relinquishing responsibility of any items or possessions- including money- that is lost or damaged during the visit)

Risk Assessment and Planning: If approved, the EVC will meet with the visit leader to discuss the level of risk as identified in the table below. If the visit/activity had not previously been identified as category 3 then the governing body will need to be informed immediately. The visit leader will also be issued with a checklist and timescale for completion of the required risk assessment. The EVC will also provide advice and guidance regarding the completion of the Risk Assessment.

Offsite trip categories:

| Category | Definition | Requirements for notification and approval |
|---------------|---|--|
| 1 (low risk) | Straightforward routine visits which involve everyday level of risk, such as slips and trips. Examples include non-adventurous activities such as simple country walks, local field studies in local environments for which there need only be minor training. | Must be authorised by the Headteacher or EVC at least one week before the visit. |
| | These require enhanced planning with event/activity specific risk assessment and will include all residential visits not in category 3 and non-residential visits not in categories 1 or 3. Examples could include open country walking of the Duke of Edinburgh Award – Bronze level type – for which more formal training would be needed | Must be authorised by the headteacher/EVC using EVOLVE at least 3 weeks before the visit, and then approved by the Educational Visits Advisory team of the Local Authority. |
| 3 (High Risk) | These visits are defined as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visits outside of the UK - Visits which include adventurous activities such as canoeing, sailing, mountaineering for which staff must have specific training, ideally linked to a nationally recognised accredited qualification | The governing body must be informed of this visit. It must be authorised by the headteacher, EVC using EVOLVE at least 6 weeks before the visit, and then approved by the Educational Visits Advisory team of the Local Authority. |

Responsibilities

Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)

The headteacher has appointed a member of the Leadership Team to be the EVC along with a member of Associate staff. Both members of staff have completed the EVC training course delivered by The Educational Advisory Service based at Derwent Hill Outdoor Education and Training Centre. The role of the EVC should:

- Be a champion for all aspects of visits and outdoor learning.
- Challenge colleagues across all curriculum areas to use visits and outdoor learning effectively.
- Support/oversee planning to ensure all visits are well-managed, engaging, relevant, enjoyable and memorable.
- Mentor new staff, support their on-going development and sample monitor their activity to identify any further training needs.

- Ensure that planning complies with your employer's requirements and that the arrangements are ready for approval within agreed timescales.
- Support your Head/Manager and Governors/Trustees in approval decisions so that all those with responsibility have the competency to fulfil their roles.
- Ensure visits are evaluated against aims for learning, that good practice is shared and any issues are followed up and comply with statutory and employer's requirements.
- Keep your Senior Leadership Team and Governors/Trustees informed
- about visits taking place and their contribution to school effectiveness.
- (OEAP National Guidance: 3.4j Educational Visits Coordinator

Trip Leader

- Where so instructed and delegated by the responsible person named in this policy, to plan the proposed visit taking into account the health and safety risks that may arise before, during and after the visit.
- To appoint, where considered appropriate, any competent deputy or deputies in support of any visit.
- To ensure that as much relevant information is obtained on any proposed visit, venue and location to enable an appropriate risk assessment to be carried out. Staff cannot be responsible and are not liable for a known historical, medical condition if information is withheld from the trip leader prior to the visit.
- To ensure that the needs of all those included on the visit are assessed and provided for.
- To ensure that the risk assessment(s) also determine the appropriate level of supervision, first aiders and any other specifically trained and/or experienced personnel.
- Ensuring that all equipment and materials required for the visit are adequate and arrangements are made to store them safely and correctly.
- To ensure parents are provided with all the necessary information about the educational visit, any equipment etc. they need to provide and the standards of conduct expected of their child(ren).
- Where appropriate, invite parents/carers to any briefing sessions.
- To brief all group members, including students and parents, on the main elements of the visit, the standards expected and the roles and responsibilities of all prior to commencing the visit.
- To finalise all details and arrangements with the EVC.
- To explore school Code of Conduct and any other relevant rules related to that activity.
- To monitor for potential risks or hazards whilst involved in the visit/activity and adapt procedures to reduce/mitigate these risks

Teaching staff involved in the educational visit

- Support the Trip Leader in all requirements and follow instructions.
- Look out for the health and safety of themselves and those around them and for whom they also have appointed responsibility.
- Assist in general control and discipline requirements.
- Inform the Trip Leader of any concerns, observed or otherwise.

Parents/Carers

- Must provide emergency contact details prior to the educational visit.
- Sign and return a consent form
- Provide any relevant information known to them regarding the (current) health of their child and if necessary, complete an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) and/or Administration of Medicine Form.

- To disclose any specific details of concerns for their child that may be appropriate to the nature of the visit and any activities planned.

Students

- Must be respectful at all times and behave appropriately in line with the
- UTC Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Dress sensibly and in line with the advice given regarding the specific activities. This includes wearing any safety clothing/equipment.
- Must follow the instructions given to them by any accompanying adults, including adults from external providers.
- Must not take any unnecessary risks or place their fellow students at unnecessary risk.
- Report to any supervising adult any concerns they may have during the visit and, in particular, if and when they are asked to partake in any activities.

Planning and preparation

The timing of trips and visits

It is essential to the smooth running of the rest of the UTC that trips are properly planned and arranged to ensure minimal disruption to all, both those on the trip and those left behind.

Departments are strongly encouraged to plan their pattern of trips and visits for the coming academic year as far in advance as they can. This allows clashes to be kept to a minimum. Trips and visits planned well in advance must be included in the termly calendar. Events listed in the calendar take priority over non-calendared events. The earlier a trip is planned, the more likely it is to be approved. If two events clash, then the EVC will resolve the matter.

Students must miss lessons as rarely as possible. While it is often easy to justify a trip from the benefit to one's own subject, lessons missed in other subjects need to be considered. Obviously, there will be times when it is impossible to avoid taking students out during lesson time, but full consideration must be made of alternative times before making such a decision.

Staff organising a trip must consult as widely as possible with colleagues who might be affected and think carefully about the possible impact of a trip. E.g. as far as possible, residential trips should take place during holidays to avoid a loss of teaching time.

Informing Other People

It is essential that all people concerned with the trip are fully informed at appropriate times. Once the planning has been completed and the trip has been approved, the full details of the trip must be prepared. These details, together with copies of letters for parents, must be submitted to the EVC before being sent out.

Communicating with parents

At enrolment all students and parents are consulted about educational visits and specialism employer engagement and asked to sign a generic permission slip to cover the majority of visits and placements. However, for all residential trips, specific signed permission must be obtained from parents. Group leaders must have an alternative option planned for any student whose parents decline permission to go on a trip. Parents must be informed in writing about all trips.

If a trip involves overnight accommodation, parents must be given full details of the type of accommodation provided and the security arrangements which are in place to ensure the safety of their child. They must be fully informed as to the nature of the trip, with a clear indication if the students may be unaccompanied while away from the UTC. Parents must acknowledge that their child is fit enough to go on the trip, outline any health problems and authorise the group leader to act on their behalf in an emergency. They must also provide a contact number for the duration of the trip.

For longer trips, particularly those overseas, it is a good idea to hold a Parents' Information Evening a few weeks before departure. This allows information to be shared, questions to be asked and answered, and reassurance to be given where appropriate. Publishing an information booklet for parents and students is also strongly advised. The EVC can give advice about the best way to organise such events and to prepare such booklets.

Informing NE Futures UTC

The UTC must also know all the relevant details for a trip. The NE Futures UTC EVOLVE Trip Pack must be completed in full and given to the EVC well in advance of the departure date. For day visits this should be at least two weeks before the trip departs. For residential trips, where possible NE Futures UTC Trip information on EVOLVE should be completed at least four weeks prior to departure so that any concerns or problems that may arise can be sorted out. This form, when properly completed, must contain all the information required about a trip. It will also include a risk assessment procedure. The EVC will ensure copies of the relevant information are shared with all relevant staff.

The trip leader must ensure that he/she is in possession of all parental consent forms, all contact number details throughout the trip and will also carry with them emergency contacts for senior leaders in case of a serious accident.

Upon departure of the trip, visit or placement the group leader must take a register of students and inform reception of who they have with them on the visit. This ensures that all students are accounted for on and off site.

All group leaders must carry an 'outreach bag' with them during the trips, visits or placements. This bag will contain all relevant generic paperwork such as accident report forms, safeguarding forms, emergency contact forms, this policy, a fully packed first aid kit, a torch and in some instances a NE Futures UTC mobile phone. This bag will ensure that the group leader is prepared for most eventualities. The EVC will hold these bags, and staff can sign them out for their visits.

The EVC acts as the main contact for the trip. If the EVC is unable to do this, they will ensure that another senior colleague is designated as the main contact for the trip.

The cost of UTC trips

Staff must think carefully about the cost of a trip. Costs should be kept to a minimum and parents must be given the chance to decline a trip on financial grounds. In such a case provision must be made for the student who cannot go on a trip. The UTC will seek to subsidise trips for such families wherever feasible.

It is very important that the cost of trips is recovered as quickly as possible. Indeed, if it is possible to charge for a trip before it has taken place then this should be done. E.g. where a cheque is raised by the UTC to pay for a trip in advance, the group leader must pass a list of the students on the trip, together with a copy of the letter sent to parents, to the Business Manager at the same time as the request for the cheque so that charges can be added to UTC bills quickly. Once final numbers are known, any changes must also be passed through to the Business Manager. Delays and/or errors in this process have the potential to create significant problems. The group leader must take responsibility for all financial arrangements related to travel.

Where possible, it is recommended that the cost of the trip be handled electronically. Where cash and cheques are used as payment, they should be made directly to the EVC who will keep them in locked storage and paid into the bank as soon as possible. The letter sent to parents must make clear the method of payment. If cheques are requested then they must be made payable to 'NE Futures UTC', not to individual members of staff, and handed in or sent to reception. The letter sent to parents must be clear on this point.

Any money left over at the end of the trip cannot be carried forward to the next financial year or to future trips. It must either be credited to parents or, if the amount is too small for this to be practical, credited to the relevant budget as defined by the Business Manager.

Supervision, including ratios and vetting checks (e.g. DBS checks for volunteers on overnight stays)

The group leader is the named member of staff on the trips, visits and placement paperwork. It is this member of staff who must ensure the safety of the group at all times. The Principal, Assistant Principal and EVC must be confident with the member of staff's competence to lead a group.

The group leader must ensure that the staffing for a trip is 'reasonable'. This will depend on the age, gender mix, ability and behaviour of the students involved. It will depend on the type of activity undertaken, the nature of the journey and the type of accommodation if the trip is overnight. The competence of the adults supervising a trip must also be considered, together with the need for first aid cover.

The UTC advises the following ratios for general activities such as visits to local employers and museums or for local walks, in normal circumstances:

- 1 adult for every 15 students - year 10 onwards
- 1 adult for every 20 students - year 12 onwards

However, it is stressed that these are only examples. Group leaders must assess the risks and consider an appropriate safe supervision level for their particular trip.

Trips to remote areas or those which involve more hazardous activities will clearly require a higher level of supervision. It is also the case that many institutions which are open for trips or visits have their own staffing guidelines which need to be adhered to. Staff taking trips must always check with the locations they are visiting about such matters.

When group leaders are considering the staffing for their trips, they must always bear in mind the consequences of staff absences on those left behind. If several people are required to staff a trip, then consideration should be given to using other staff members as additional helpers. However, in these cases suitable cover must be available for anyone on a trip.

If a trip is taking place which involves several members of staff, each person going on the trip must ensure that the relevant paperwork has been completed. The composition of the staff involved with a trip often changes from the time the initial permission form is submitted. It is very important that the EVC, Assistant Principal and Principal agree and understand exactly who will be out on trips and that sufficient cover arrangements for lessons and duties have been put in place. The group leader must coordinate this process, but all staff who go on trips must take responsibility for ensuring their lessons and duties are covered appropriately.

If a trip cannot be fully covered by members of staff, there are circumstances where parents can be used to supervise trips. All adults who supervise trips should have completed a DBS check if they will spend any time alone with children. Volunteers should be given appropriate safeguarding training as part of their preparation, either at the start of the year or for a specific trip. Staff who need further guidance and clarification on this matter should discuss it with the EVC during the planning stages for a trip. Equally, any concerns about staffing or staffing ratios on trips should be referred to the EVC, who can give further guidance and advice.

Risk assessments

A risk assessment is a careful examination of what could cause harm to people, so that we can decide if an activity is safe or what additional preventative or mitigation measures are appropriate.

The UTC must ensure that the person assessing the risk understands the risks and is familiar with the activity planned. UTC employees should take a common sense and proportionate approach. Remember that the purpose of risk assessment and management is to help children to undertake activities safely, not to prevent activities from taking place.

The medical risk assessment is included in the Standard Consent Form which is completed at student interviews.

The risk assessment must be based on the following considerations:

- What are the hazards?

- Who might they affect?
- What safety measures must be taken to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the group leader implement security measures?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?

For most 'routine' visits and placements the generic risk assessments appropriate to that activity will be sufficient for the consideration and mitigation of risk. It is still very important that all staff on the trip fully understand the generic risk assessments and that students are briefed. In all cases consideration should be given to a host company or organisation's risk assessment and whether there are any specific risks worth considering in that particular visit.

Any visits or placements involving high risk activities and all trips involving overnight stays require a full, separate risk assessment. For trips that will involve outdoor or adventurous activities or indeed residential trips, staff are reminded to request copies of risk assessments from the service provider well in advance of the trip and to make reference to these in their own risk assessments.

Bus transport

Many UTC trips and visits will involve transportation by some type of bus, either public transport, a hired minibus or hired coach. It is imperative that staff and students use such transportation safely. Everyone must always wear a seatbelt. It is good practice for staff to remind all students of the need for good behaviour before all minibus and bus journeys. Staff must remember that the journey is an integral part of a trip and appropriate risk assessments must be carried out.

The Wearing of Seatbelts in Vehicles

To ensure that all journeys by UTC students are undertaken in the safest possible manner, it is the UTC's policy that seatbelts must be worn at all times by all staff and students in cars (including taxis), minibuses and coaches. All staff and students are made aware of this and are asked to adhere to the policy strictly. We will do everything we reasonably can to enforce this policy.

We therefore ask parents to help us to reinforce this message about the use of seatbelts to students, so that we can continue to ensure the safety of all students when they travel in vehicles.

Reconnaissance visits

If possible, an exploratory visit should be made by a member of staff before any trip is undertaken. A key factor in reducing risk is knowledge of the place to be visited. Whilst such visits may not always be practical, staff should make every effort to consider such an undertaking.

UTC staff will build knowledge of local companies, and it may be appropriate to discuss with a colleague who has already visited a company. It is important that staff are clear about the specific activities to be undertaken on a visit to be able to calibrate risk.

A member of staff who is to lead a group abroad, on a residential visit or on an outdoor activity should make a special effort to carry out a reconnaissance visit. If this is

impossible then a minimum measure would be to obtain specific information by letter from the venue and from reputable organisations that can provide such information.

It is important to remember that places such as outdoor pursuits centres, leisure centres, museums, theatres, etc have to carry out their own risk assessments for the facilities they provide. If copies of these are obtained by members of staff, then this will reduce the burden of the risk assessment process.

Factors to Consider in Planning a Trip

Our intention is to use the EVOLVE System to manage trips. This has the advantage that there is a clear process which ensures that planning is thorough. The EVC will have training in the system and all trips will be approved by the Principal or Assistant Principal.

The following list is not exhaustive, but it tries to summarise what needs to be done during the planning and organisation of a trip. The list also gives further ideas about areas for risk assessment.

- Facilities/equipment the group will need to take
- Facilities/equipment provided at the venue
- Staff training needs
- Designating someone to record the visit and carry accident forms etc
- Transport arrangements, including meeting arrangements for trips which leave before the start of morning and collection arrangements for trips which return after the end of normal hours
- Insurance arrangements
- Communication arrangements
- Supervision ratio
- Contingency plans for enforced changes of plans or late return
- Information to parents
- Preparing students
- Arrangements for sending students home early
- Emergency arrangements

Emergency procedures

Teachers in charge of students have a duty of care to ensure students are safe and healthy. They also have a common law duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would. Teachers should not hesitate to act in an emergency and to take lifesaving action in an extreme situation.

Emergency procedures are an essential part of planning a visit. If an emergency happens the priorities are to:

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

Guidance on Emergency Procedures

All group leaders and their deputies must take a copy of the following guidelines.

- Establish nature and extent of the emergency
- Make sure that all other members of the party are accounted for and safe
- If there are injuries, establish their extent and administer first aid (if you have been trained or feel capable – but be aware of consequences that might follow were you to give incorrect treatment)
- Establish names of the injured and call relevant emergency services
- Advise other party staff of the incident and that emergency procedures are in operation
- Ensure that an adult from the party accompanies casualties to hospital
- Ensure that the remainder of the party are adequately supervised throughout and arrange for their early return to base
- Arrange for one adult to remain at the incident site to liaise with emergency services until the incident is over and all children are accounted for
- Control access to telephones until contact is made with the Principal, EVC or Assistant Principal and until they have had time to contact those directly involved. Pass full details of the incident (name, nature, date and time of incident, location of incident, details of injuries, names and telephone numbers of those involved, action taken so far).
- The EVC, Assistant Principal or Principal will arrange to contact the parents of those involved. In serious incidents the parents of all party members should be informed.

Media Contact

- A designated person should act as the point of contact with the media to whom all involved should direct questions
- Under no circumstances should the name of any casualty be divulged to the media.
- The group leader should write down as soon as practicable all relevant details. Any witnesses should be recorded. Any associated equipment should be kept in its original condition.
- Legal liability should not be discussed or admitted

All accident forms should be completed and insurers and HSE or Local Authority inspectors should be contacted

Inform parents of any delays that will be necessitated. Note: copies of DFE guidelines are kept by the EVC.

Additional procedures for visits overseas

Prior to the visit the group leader should obtain and take with them:

- European Health Insurance Card (where appropriate) and significant medical histories
- Details of insurance arrangements and the company's telephone number
- Location of local hospital/medical services
- In an emergency, the framework outlined above should operate. In addition, the group leader should notify the British Embassy/Consulate.

After the trip

The group leader must inform the EVC (or whoever has been delegated as the UTC contact) that the party has returned safely and ensure that all the students are safely collected by a responsible adult, such as a parent or guardian.

If any difficulties or incidents occur on a trip, the EVC must be informed as soon as possible after the trip returns so that appropriate follow up action can be taken quickly.

Additional guidelines

Residential trips Involving mixed parties

Staff organising such trips should try to ensure that a male and female member of staff accompanies the party. If this is impossible, the spouse of a member of staff who is willing to accompany the party is acceptable, but this should be discussed in advance with the Assistant Principal and EVC. If this is impossible then the matter should be discussed in good time with the Principal before plans are finalised. All adults involved in residential trips require a DBS disclosure before accompanying students. Volunteers and other adults will need to have a disclosure application processed in good time before departure. Group leaders must seek permission for adults who are not employed by the UTC to accompany a trip. This must be sought at least three months before the departure date.

Sixth form trips – making own way to and from venue

Staff organising trips for sixth form who make their own way to and/or from a venue must state this fact to parents in writing stating that students will not be supervised when they are travelling. Parents need to accept responsibility for the students at this time by signing correspondence to that effect or providing consent verbally by telephone. This conversation should ideally be logged.

Medical treatment on trip abroad

In case of medical treatment required abroad, please contact the Insurers emergency helpline for advice.

Driving minibuses

The guidelines which follow apply to all minibuses, regardless of their origin, including buses hired from outside companies.

Minibus drivers must be approved drivers of the UTC and must (at least) have taken a MIDAS test (or equivalent) which is still valid. Larger minibuses require a D1 licence, and this should be checked before training.

The minibus driver is responsible for ensuring that the bus is not overloaded, that the students have their seat belts on and that all doors are properly secured. If a minibus is being used with a roof rack or with a trailer, it is the driver's responsibility to ensure all loads are safe. Staff must take great care if they are loading a roof rack or trailer.

Students must be warned of the potential dangers involved with loading minibuses and they must not be allowed to climb onto roof racks.

The safety of students, drivers and other passengers is paramount, and minibuses must be driven accordingly. Staff must exercise all possible caution when driving a minibus and must not drive minibuses when it is potentially unsafe to do so, e.g. in severe weather conditions. Speed limits and sensible road speeds must be strictly observed. It should be noted that the performance of a fully loaded minibus is severely constrained, e.g. slower acceleration, longer stopping distances, reduced stability in high winds or on exposed roads, and impaired cornering. Seating capacity and cargo capacity must never be exceeded.

As with staffing ratios, there are no exact figures for the number of staff who should be involved in a minibus journey. The level of supervision depends on the type of journey involved. As always, the group leader must ensure that the staffing for a journey is 'reasonable'. This will depend on the age, gender mix, ability and behaviour of the students involved. It will depend on the nature of the journey and its distance. The competence of the adults supervising a journey must also be considered, together with the need for first aid cover.

It is strongly recommended that staff do not drive minibuses if they feel excessively tired. The consumption of alcohol when in charge of a minibus either as a driver or a passenger is forbidden, and due notice must be paid to 'night before' consumption of alcohol.

On longer journeys, regular stops should occur, and staff must not drive for more than two hours at a time without a break. As far as possible, two staff should be available for longer journeys. Judgements about potential problems with a journey must form part of the risk assessment process which takes place before departure.

Driving a minibus in the UK

Car licences held before 1 January 1997

If you had entitlement to drive cars prior to 1 January 1997 – shown as group A on an old style licence or as category B and D1 not for hire or reward on a new style licence – you can drive a minibus provided you are 21 or over, the minibus has a maximum of 17 seats (including the driver's) and is not being used for hire or reward.

The UTC does not have insurance for use for hire or reward, and therefore does not permit such use.

Rules from 1 January 1998

Your minibus entitlement will remain valid in the UK and on temporary visits abroad until your licence is next renewed. When this happens, your minibus entitlement (D1 and D1 + E – not for hire or reward) can only be issued if you make a special application which will involve meeting higher medical standards. Similarly, if you apply to replace a lost licence, you will find that your entitlement has been lost unless you make an application to maintain it. If your minibus entitlement is not renewed, categories D1 and D1 + E will no longer appear on your licence.

Drivers whose licence is due for renewal will receive advice about these new procedures with their renewal reminder letter. DVLA's fact sheet 'Renewing your car driving licence' provides information about the medical standards.

Medically restricted licence

Drivers with restricted medical licence will check whether they are insured to drive minibuses.

Car licences issued from 1 January 1997 and drivers who do not have minibus entitlement (Category D1)

Drivers who first held a licence to drive cars after 1 January 1997 only have an entitlement to drive vehicles with up to 8 passenger seats (see DVLA leaflet INF 28 for further details).

You may drive a minibus with up to 16 passenger seats provided:

- You are authorised to drive on behalf of the UTC but not for hire or reward
- You are aged 21 or over
- You have held a car (category B) licence for at least 2 years
- You are providing your service on a voluntary (i.e. not being paid) basis and
- The service must be provided for UTC students or for groups of people whom the UTC serves. The service must not be provided to members of the general public and any charges made must be on a non-profit basis.
- The minibus maximum weight is not more than 3.5 tonnes excluding any specialist equipment for the carriage of disabled passengers. Minibuses up to 4.25 tonnes will be permitted in certain circumstances (see below).
- If you are aged 70 or over, you are able to meet the health standards for driving a D1 vehicle

When driving a minibus under these conditions you may only drive in the UK. You may not receive any payment or consideration for doing so other than out of pocket expenses or tow any size of trailer.

Maximum authorised mass and specialist equipment

The maximum weight of a vehicle that may be used on the road is known as the maximum authorised mass (mam). It may also be described as the gross vehicle weight or permissible maximum weight. This is normally shown on a plate fitted to the vehicle.

There is no specified method of calculating the weight of specialist equipment such as tail lifts or wheelchair security fittings. There is an allowance of 750kgs for the extra equipment for minibuses, which are intended for the carriage of passengers with disabilities or wheelchair users. This would cover minibuses with a max of 4.25 tonnes and would be comparable with the weight threshold which new drivers of cars/light goods vehicles are permitted to drive.

Driving a minibus abroad

All entitlements on British licences continue to be accepted at face value during temporary visits to other EC/EFA countries.

Anyone wishing to drive (not for hire and reward) a minibus abroad, which can carry 9 to 16 passengers, must be in possession of a licence showing category D1. Driving licences issued before 1 June 1990 do not show this category explicitly, as it is part of group A entitlement. Anyone in possession of such a licence is advised, before going abroad, to obtain a certificate INTP5 from their local Traffic Area Office. However, it should be stressed that there is no legal requirement to carry one.

Transport of children in a car/mini bus by a member of staff

It is an acknowledged practice that teachers, from time to time, transport students in their cars to various external events. However, before doing so staff must seek permission from the Principal or the Assistant Principal. Staff should refer closely to the UTC's Child Protection Policy to ensure that they are not putting themselves or the student at risk of harm or of allegations of risk of harm to a student.

Before a member of staff uses his/her car for transport of children in connection with a UTC activity for the first time then such action should be discussed with the teacher's insurers. Clarification must be sought that the cover is wide enough to embrace the use of the vehicle in connection with the teacher's/employer's business. Should the answer be in the negative then in no circumstances must the vehicle be used to transport children on behalf of the UTC and the matter should immediately be referred to the Business Manager.