

This Free E-Book is brought to you by Natural-Aging.com.

**[100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment](#)
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!**

Educational Visits – Good Practice, Risks and Hazards.

By Paddy Swan

Educational Visits – Good Practice, Risks and Hazards. by Paddy Swan

A Head Teacher's Safety Management Toolkit Article. <http://www.swaneducation.co.uk>

Educational Visits – Good Practice, Risks and Hazards

by Paddy Swan

Horror stories about British teachers taking Educational Visits and then being prosecuted for deaths seem always to be with us.

We have some 60,000 schools in the UK and if each school only does one educational visit a year this is still a lot of visits. By the law of averages something will go wrong somewhere sometime, but there have been about 4 prosecutions of teachers over the last almost ten years. That is to say that out of probably 1 million educational visits about 4 teachers have been prosecuted and only 3 have been found guilty.

Manslaughter by gross negligence has been the charge which has made UK teachers' blood run cold and led one of our teacher Unions to circularise all members with advice on this topic.

The fact of the matter is that no teacher has ever been prosecuted for following good practice and good practice for educational visits has been laid out by the DfES and published in Guidance on their website, The Health and Safety Executive as regulators of UK health and safety have

referred to this Guidance and thus given their imprimatur to what good practice actually is.

This article is about the underlying principles to put in place good practice when a visit needs to be organised.

The key thing for any school to do is to ensure that a competent Group Leader or Educational Visit Co-ordinator is appointed. They need to be by the Headteacher and Governors in writing. They also need to be competent not only, to run a visit but also, to carry out a HIRA (Hazard Identification Risk Assessment) for any proposed visit.

A HIRA is quite a specific matter in UK Health and Safety Law and terms and this article aims to introduce you to the concepts and some of the terminology, as well as giving you some tools to carry out a Risk Assessment.

Before any visit all visit Hazards need to be identified and Risks reduced.

What is a Hazard?

Simply put a hazard is anything that could cause harm.

For example;

- Uneven surfaces when mountain or fell walking, slippery conditions caused by ice and snow.
- Children standing up in a moving minibus.
- Children falling into water.
- Hazards specific to a particular activity e.g skiing, swimming, or almost any activity or sport.

How would a visit organiser know about hazards on a site never visited or discussed with an experienced colleague?

What is a Risk?

The risk is the likelihood that someone will be harmed by the hazard.

On a visit, there may be many more hazards than you may think and if you are acting as the EVC or as a single Group

Leader for a small school, you may not have personal experience.

If you do not feel you know enough about a particular topic seek competent help. A search of websites and links from these can help you in this.

Steps must be taken to reduce the risk of any hazard causing harm. This is done by removing or controlling the risk.

Controlling Risks

Generally it is better if the hazard can be removed and if can't be then it needs to be controlled.

For example, an instruction to children to remain seated in a moving vehicle must be enforced, if seatbelts are not fitted as standard.

The risk of children falling over if the vehicle has to swerve or brake suddenly may be removed by the seatbelts or reduced by controlling it by ensuring the children remain seated.

This is a Control Measure.

The Control Measure is a method of reducing the risk if it cannot be eliminated entirely.

If the hazard cannot be removed it should be possible to eliminate, or substantially reduce the risk by providing protection and isolating the person from the hazard by providing protection e.g. a guard on a powered tool or engine.

In other words, separate the hazard from the individual.

If separating the person from the hazard is not practicable, the individual may be protected, for example, by wearing seat belts in a Minibus.

The Visit Group Leader/ EVC will need to be aware of the Hazards and Risks of the visit and will need to know how to carry out a Hazard Identification Risk Assessment for any visit or trip.

However, if you are unable to reduce risk to an acceptable minimum by these means, you inform your head teacher promptly.

If you have not the competence to identify hazards and reduce risks for a particular activity seek help – some useful websites may be found through a simple search and the DfES Guide itself goes some way towards identifying specific hazards

HIRA – the procedure for reducing risks

- Identify the Hazard
- Assess the Risk
- Institute necessary Control Measures

The above procedure is known as a HIRA – Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment and it is the one to be followed when completing Risk Assessments in the Workplace or for carrying out a Risk Assessment for Visits.

Is the Action taken sufficient?

You must train yourself to recognise hazards and take steps to eliminate them or to apply suitable control measures.

Absolute Safety

There is no such thing as absolute safety, hazards may be fairly minor, an uneven surface , for example, but the risk may be high and the outcomes, especially if the risk of a trip is at the top of flight of metal or concrete stairs.

In fact the whole UK Health and Safety law is based around the principle that you and the employer carry out your duties "so far as is reasonably practicable".

This means that the duties on employers are not absolute duties and a balance has to be struck between taking precautions and the cost of those precautions.

This is why the law is amplified by Precedents, Approved Codes of Practice (ACOPs) Codes and Guidances.

One explanation of the words "reasonably practicable" is

that such a duty is to be applied as far as is technically possible or feasible when weighing the risks against the costs of taking the measures necessary for averting the risks.

There is always scope for argument about what is and is not "reasonably practicable". But it is a fact that provided you follow good practice there is no need to fear any personal responsibility as a result of an accident.

The hazard of death by drowning during a visit to the local swimming pool could be a major one but the risk may be low because of supervision and flotation aids and trained First Aiders with expertise in Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) on hand.

Equally, the hazard of tripping whilst walking between demonstrations could be a minor one but the risk may be high if children are allowed to run around in an uncontrolled way.

All Teachers need to know something about Risk Assessment and this is one of the major points of this article highlighting how to look at Hazards and Risks as applied to educational visits and trips.

Risk Assessment for Educational Visits – General Procedures

UK safety practice is laid down in Policies, Procedures, Guidance and Regulations which require Visit Group Leaders, Educational Visit CO-ordinators, teachers and their employers to take the following risk assessments and control steps. The Group Leader will take primary responsibility for reviewing and agreeing these for the specific Educational Trip and Visit for which they may be appointed:

1. Identify the presence of a potential hazard.
2. Assess the risk to health and safety.
3. Eliminate the hazard if practicable.
4. If not practicable, reduce the risk by separating people from it.

5.If this is not practicable, reduce the risk by protecting the person.

6.Provide colleagues and pupils with information about health and safety risks and training in the use of control measures and equipment.

This can be easily summarised into a series of steps:

Step One – Look for the Hazards

Step Two – Decide who might be harmed and how.

Step Three – Evaluate the risks and decide whether existing precautions are sufficient or more needs to be done.

Step Four – Record your findings

Step Five – Review your assessment and decide whether you need to revise it.

This is particularly important on visits where conditions such as weather may change. This is sometimes referred to as ongoing Risk Assessment, but in fact it is simply a re-iteration of the review atge.

Hazards on Visits

The hazards for any Visit or Trip fall into three clear areas which can be addressed to identify sources of hazard. These are :-

- i. Safer Physical Environment
- ii. People/Procedures (Harm reduction/Incidents)
- iii. External Impacts e.g Transportation or Weather

If you imagine a pupil on a skiing trip slipping on ice, they may come to no harm, break a bone or, indeed, break their neck.

If a school bus has a defect on the brakes there may be a skid with no casualties, a minor accident or a major accident causing death.

We need to recognise that hazard outcomes are largely unpredictable and we can only progress by taking a "loss prevention" approach where we look at expected outcomes and the numbers which are likely to be affected.

The important point is that identification and control of hazards has now become a legal management requirement (cf. Management of Health and Safety Regulations – Regulation 4) and the types of hazard which we need to address in school and on school visits include issues set out under the DfES Guidances including Guidances on Visits– 1998).

For ease of approach hazards may be classified by the following categories :-

Class "A" Hazard A condition or practice likely to cause permanent disability, loss of life or body part (e.g. an eye).

Many visit based incidents including road traffic accidents and involving water based activities have been proven to fall into this category.

A condition or practice likely to cause extensive loss of structure, equipment or material (typically hazards from fire, electricity and machines).

For example, flammables being stored incorrectly and near sources of ignition.

Class "B" Hazard

A condition or practice likely to cause serious injury or illness (resulting in temporary disability) or property damage that disrupts, but is less severe than Class "A", e.g. slippery conditions on a skiing holiday or a broken tread at the top of the stairs in a hotel.

Class "C" Hazard

A condition or practice likely to cause minor (non-disabling) injury or illness, or non-disruptive property damage, e.g. build-up of clutter in a room being used for teaching or as a base during an activity holiday.

Measuring Risk

Risk can be understood as the measure of Probability and Hazard.

Probability of Occurrence

Once you have considered what could happen, you should ask yourself "how often?" and the simple categories are :-

§Frequent Probability §Occasional
Probability §Rare Probability

The notion of frequency will vary depending on the activity and might be considered in :- · Number of People. · Hours in contact with pupils or duration of visit Using both the ideas of Hazard and Occurrence the following table can be created :-

Minor Hazard – C 3 2 1

Serious Hazard – B 7 5 4

Major Hazard – A 9 8 6
Frequency (High) (Low) (Moderate)

From this table and approach a HIRA may be produced which has an indication of seriousness of a potential Risk and gives the Group Leader/EVC a method of prioritising Risk Reduction.

Recording your HIRAs

The method set out in the previous section allows a set of priorities to be drawn up and resources, financial or human, set accordingly.

Obviously, major hazards with high frequency should be given the highest level of attention. Any item or area scoring 6 or above should be highlighted for specific attention and a copy of the Assessment should be passed to either the school EVC or the Headteacher on completion.

You will find Specific Hazard and Risk Assessment forms for Visits and Trips contained within the DfES Guidance for

Visits at www.dfes.gov.uk.

This document gives fuller listings on the particular hazard and risks to be addressed during planning for visits.

If it wasn't written down – it didn't happen.

Any staff involved in an incident should always make notes or fill out an incident/ casualty report on any event attended, no matter how minor.

Proper records will help you to recall the incident if you are ever asked about it at a later stage. The responsibility is greater if you have a role as a Group Leader or a teacher first aider. attending an incident or a teacher administering medicines to a pupil.

Records may be used in a court, so ensure that your report or notes are accurate, factual, contain all relevant information, and are based on observations rather than opinions.

Your role as a Group Leader on any visit makes it important that all your actions are recorded, especially as these actions pertain to your HIRA.

When preparing any report some general guidelines should be followed:

- Use ink only.
- Any corrections should be crossed out with a single line and initialled. Do not use correction fluid to correct any mistakes.
- Sign and date the record.
- The information should be kept confidential, and should only be accessed by authorised people.
- In any medical incident, a copy of any report, especially of any treatment at site, should be also sent to the A&E Department at the hospital with the patient.

A Final Word

A prosecution is only made in exceptional circumstances

where a Police and HSE Investigations show elements of gross negligence so the advice to follow the simple rules of good practice will keep you secure. Remember no one has ever been prosecuted for following good safety practice.

Dr.Paddy Swan is a qualified teacher with senior management experience in UK schools and colleges. He has almost 30 years experience in developing some 100 Safe Systems of Work training solutions for industrial clients. Paddy is the author of School Basic Safety for Classroom and Support staff for UK schools and the Headteacher's Safety Management Toolkit These may be seen at <http://www.swaneducation.co.uk>

Stopping Young Risk Takers

By News Canada

(NC)–In Canada, more child deaths are due to unintentional injuries than to all other causes combined. Furthermore, injuries are a primary cause of children's hospitalizations and visits to emergency rooms. But we don't really understand why children take risks that could lead to injury. Dr. Barbara Morrongiello and her team at the University of Guelph are studying the way emotion–based factors influence children's risk–taking decisions. They predict that children who feel exhilarated by risk taking, as opposed to fearful, will be more likely to take dangerous risks. This research could help health care professionals prevent childhood injuries.

Dr. Morrongiello's research is being funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). CIHR is Canada's preeminent health research catalyst and is funded by the government of Canada. An exciting new concept, CIHR is modernizing and transforming the health research enterprise in Canada.

To learn more about CIHR please visit:

, e–mail:

or write to: CIHR, 410

Laurier Avenue West, Ottawa ON K1A 0W9.

provides a wide selection of current, ready–to–use copyright free news stories and ideas for Television, Print, Radio, and the Web.

is a niche service in public relations, offering access to print, radio, television, and now

the Internet media, with ready–to–use, editorial "fill" items. Monitoring and analysis are two more of our

primary services. The service supplies access to the national media for marketers in the private, the public, and the not-for-profit sectors. Your corporate and product news, consumer tips and information are packaged in a variety of ready-to-use formats and are made available to every Canadian media organization including weekly and daily newspapers, cable and commercial television stations, radio stations, as well as the Web sites Canadians visit most often. Visit

and learn more about

the NC services.

Stopping Young Risk Takers
Health and Safety in KS1 & KS2 Curriculum
A Great Learning Experience When Playing Video Games
Learning How To Play Golf
Defensive Driving Courses - A Brief Overview

Take Control of Alcohol
How to Use Your Mind for Study
Gate Crash into the Interior Design Industry.
English Slang Dictionary
14 Profitable eBooks



This Free E-Book has been brought to you by Natural-Aging.com.

100% Effective Natural Hormone Treatment
Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
Impair Healthy Healing In People Over The Age Of 30!