

Educational and Offsite Visits Newsletter

January 2013

1. Revision of ERYC Educational Visits Code of Practice and Safety Guidelines

Following the revision of the national guidance in 2012, the East Riding of Yorkshire Council's guidance has now been updated and revised accordingly. A draft version of the revised (2013) Local Authority Guidance can be viewed online via the existing Educational Visits webpage on www.eriding.net (click on the following weblink

http://www.eriding.net/educ_visits/guidelines.shtml), and is open for consultation and feedback until Friday 18th January.

All documents are currently available in Word so that they can be downloaded, and any proposed changes can be easily saved and displayed (please select the "track changes" facility, and use blue text to suggest additions, and red text for deletions). Please email any comments or proposed changes (including any amended documents as attachments) to taff.bowles@eastriding.gov.uk by the end of Friday 18th January. Any necessary amendments can then be made, and the Guidance can be submitted for final approval by the Council and final PDF versions (including linkages to ROVER) can be made available formally for everyone's use by the end of February 2013.

With regard to the new revised Guidance, please note in particular:

- **ERYC Guidance has been updated in accordance with the new national guidance** provided by the national Outdoor Education Adviser Panel (see www.oeadp.org.uk) – see details below.
- **There are no substantial changes to current policy or recommended good practice** – the legal framework and general principles remain the same!
- **The overall package is now entitled 'Guidance for the Management and Leadership of Offsite Visits'.**
- **The overall structure with a 'Code of Practice' (for managers), and 'Visits Guidance' (for visit leaders and managers) has been maintained** to ensure continued ease of understanding, access, and use.
- **Terminology within the revised guidance is now more generic**, as the guidance now has many users, not all of whom are educational establishments (e.g. "educational visits" become "offsite visits", and "pupils" become "young people" or "group members").
- **A number of terms and abbreviations have also been changed and updated** (e.g. "Safety Guidelines" become "Visits Guidance", and "LEA" is replaced by "LA").
- **It will be available online only** – this will make the guidance simpler to administer and update, and easier for everyone to access.
- **Each chapter of the Visits Guidance now contains a single summary page at the front**, so these pages can be downloaded and printed if required to create a simple "Introduction to the Planning and Leadership of Offsite Visits" booklet for staff.
- **The wording in many sections has been edited and hopefully improved throughout.** Some unnecessary sections have been removed, but the overall package of guidance is probably longer not shorter. Nationally, shared knowledge and good practice has increased over the years, and so any valuable new information has been added, where appropriate (for example, the Overseas Exchange Host Provider form is now also available in French, German, Spanish, and Italian versions!!). The Guidance is primarily for reference, and an online search facility will be added to help users find and access relevant information easily.
- **The appendices (useful forms etc.) can now be found at the end of each relevant chapter**, as well as in the separate Appendices section.
- **The main aim of the ERYC Visits Guidance continues to be to support and encourage educational/offsite visits and learning outside the classroom** by providing employees with simple and sensible guidance which promotes safety through recommended good practice.

2. New National “Guidance for the Management of Outdoor Learning, Offsite Visits, and Learning Outside the Classroom” launched in 2012

Following the DfE withdrawal of the original detailed guidance on educational visits - Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (HASPEV) – a move widely criticised by teaching unions and professionals in the field - the National Outdoor Education Adviser Panel (OEAP) have acted to issue detailed advice and support to school staff and others leading groups of young people on visits and learning activities outside the classroom. Launching their new National Guidance website, the Outdoor Education Advisers’ Panel Chair David Faulconbridge said: "This is a big step forward for all staff leading visits – the guidance is simple to use and readily available online. It provides advice on good practice with a balance between simple procedures and safety. National Guidance promotes proportional measures and minimal bureaucracy. Sections of the website provide specific advice for parents and governors as well as visit leaders, heads and other managers. From experience of supporting visit leaders in the field and training thousands of leaders and visit coordinators in schools we know that staff feel more confident when they know they are operating within clear, supportive guidelines. This new guidance provides that framework and it will help to ensure consistent high standards across the country and encourage staff to run high quality learning experiences outside the classroom".

National Guidance has been welcomed by professionals in the field. Russell Hobby, General Secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers said: "NAHT welcomes the panel's new "National Guidance" and recommends it to school leaders as the definitive source of advice on good practice when running visits and learning outside the classroom. It is particularly welcome as it is free of red tape and enables participants in outdoor education to focus on enjoying a valuable learning experience". Other unions have also endorsed the guidance including Aspect and the National Union of Teachers (NUT). Speaking for the NUT, Senior Adviser Amanda Brown said: "The arrival of comprehensive, web-based advice on school trips from the Outdoor Education Advisers’ Panel is timely. The NUT recommends that, where employers have not already taken steps to counter the withdrawal of HASPEV, they seriously consider adopting the OEAP’s authoritative guidance as soon as possible". The guidance is available to all staff and establishments – free of charge – at www.oeapng.info

The guidance on the website is already being used by nearly two thirds of Local Authorities in England – either as a key reference document or adopted as their guidance to their employees. It incorporates research that shows how outdoor learning can improve personal, social and emotional development as well as contributing to academic outcomes. It will be regularly updated to ensure it remains current. The Outdoor Education Advisers’ Panel has members in most Local Authorities in England and Wales (Taff Bowles, the East Riding of Yorkshire Council’s Educational Visits Officer has been a member for the past 10 years). Members provide advice, support and training to staff leading visits including teachers, youth workers and others in a wide range of establishments in the maintained sector as well as academies, voluntary aided schools etc. More information is available via www.oeap.info/

3. Adventure Activities Licensing Service (AALS) – proposed changes on hold

After the devolved administrations in Scotland and Wales decided to retain licensing in its current form, the DfE and HSE have decided to pause proposals to abolish the AALS in England while they consider further how they can develop a regulatory regime that reflects the level of risk of taking part in adventure activities, while ensuring that users are reassured about a provider’s safety management arrangements. The DfE and HSE now plan to consult further on this issue later this year. In the meantime, visit organisers and managers should continue as before and ensure that activity providers have a valid AALS licence to deliver the activities within scope of the current arrangements.

4. "Enabling Outdoor Learning" – report on a unique CPD training event for staff from ERYC primary/infant schools that took place in October 2012

This unique and exciting CPD opportunity was organised in conjunction with the Institute for Outdoor Learning, and was based at 7 primary and infant schools in the North Cave, Brough, Welton, South Cave, Elloughton, Swanland, North Ferriby cluster. The day provided opportunities to participate in several of the 20 workshops on offer (Forest Schools, Orienteering, Pond Dipping etc.), and also to observe and engage with some of the 56 real outdoor lessons that were undertaken by staff and pupils (of all ages) from the schools. The lessons linked to a wide range of curriculum areas and showed how the outdoor environment can inspire, excite, and engage pupils, and raise attainment through enhancing their understanding. These sessions provided primary teachers and teaching assistants with an opportunity to learn and share a wide range of practical ideas and resources for teaching aspects of the curriculum outside the classroom using the school grounds, gardens, and ponds. The course also encouraged staff to consider ways of developing their own school grounds to enhance outdoor learning opportunities.

Nearly 80 people (including a number of PGCE students from York St John) attended the event and the feedback was extremely positive – for example:

- *“Brilliant organisation and workshops, well delivered – lots of tips and links to curriculum”*
- *“A fantastic opportunity to experience a wide range of outdoor learning activities”*
- *“Very well organised and a wide range of knowledge shared by teachers and speakers”*
- *“Fantastic selection of activities; lots of brilliant ideas to take away”*
- *“Brilliant ideas from very enthusiastic experts”*
- *“Developed confidence in the outdoor environment and gained super ideas”*
- *“All fantastic – schools, pupils and delivery of workshops; very informative and useful”*
- *“All relevant to take back into school and specific topics very interesting and enjoyable”*
- *“I learnt a lot in every session and it helped me to think about how outdoor learning can be linked to the curriculum”*

If other schools would be interested in organising a similar event next year to promote outdoor learning, please contact Taff Bowles (tel. 01482 392417 or email taff.bowles@eastriding.gov.uk).

5. Educational Visits trends in East Riding schools

You may be interested to note the changes this past year in the number of educational visits organised by East Riding schools compared to recent years:

	2005 -	2006 -	2007 -	2008 -	2009 -	2010 -	2011 -
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Day visits	?	853	1397	1648	1945	1981	2116
UK residential	146	167	222	244	265	275	244
Overseas visits	82	102	92	82	85	81	55

This past year’s decrease in the number of residential visits in the UK and overseas is perhaps a sign of the recession really beginning to bite, and increasing transport costs...but perhaps other factors are involved. If you feel that there are other significant barriers facing staff in the organisation and leading of educational visits, please send your thoughts and ideas to Taff Bowles ERYC Educational Visits Officer (tel 01482 392417 or email taff.bowles@eastriding.gov.uk), and hopefully ways can be found to overcome some of the current obstacles.

6. Minibus driver licence requirements

The latest DfE advice states that “school staff can drive the school minibus without any special licence” as long as certain conditions are met. This advice from the government is not new, as it reinforces the guidance that the DCSF made several years ago, along with the DVLA and the Dept for Transport. However, many of the UK’s local authority’s legal teams and the Association

of Chief Police Officers have warned schools to be wary of accepting this guidance as it is more complicated than might first appear, and there has been no test case yet to establish this in law – and the consequences for the driver of having the incorrect licence (D1) could potentially be very serious. It is an issue that will be raised again this year with the ERYC legal team and the Transport Services team, following further discussions with MPs and Chief Police Officers. Hopefully, sufficient reassurances given to all those concerned so that this situation can be finally resolved.

7. Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme (MiDAS) training required for all minibus drivers

For several years now, ERYC policy has required all minibus drivers to be MiDAS trained (requiring a 1-day training/assessment course). Existing minibus drivers (including those who passed their test before 1/1/97 and already have D1 on their licence) should now all be MiDAS trained, but they are required to undertake MIDAS refresher training (involving a 1-day course) every 4 years. MiDAS courses can be booked via the LA Transport Services team (call 01482 395576). Hessle High School also now offer MiDAS training courses (contact Steve Benson 01482 648604). School managers should also carry out annual checks to ensure and record that minibus drivers are still suitable and fit to drive.

8. Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) accreditation scheme

LOtC Mark is a national accreditation scheme recognising schools, and other organisations working with young people, which have a strong commitment to providing frequent, continuous, and progressive LOtC for their pupils. As well as recognising exemplary provision, LOtC Mark will provide a framework to support schools in developing their LOtC offering to the benefit of their young people. Taff Bowles (ERYC Educational Visits Officer) is now an accredited assessor for the LOtC Mark and is happy to provide advice and support for schools that are planning to attain this award. For further information, see www.lotc.org.uk

9. Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Teacher Packs and training opportunities

The Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (CLOtC) is offering a range of Teacher Packs which provide practical lesson ideas that have clear links to the curriculum. The Teacher Packs each contain 6 lesson ideas linking to the science & maths and English curriculum from EYFS to Key Stage 5. CLOtC is also offering half day training courses to schools on “Planning an LOtC Curriculum”. The training can be tailored to a school’s specific needs, and will enable staff to develop a whole-school approach to LOtC. For more information contact elaine.skates@lotc.org.uk

10. Farm visits

Ahead of the petting farm season, the Health Protection Agency is reminding people, especially those with responsibility for young children, to enjoy their farm visits safely by ensuring good hand hygiene after touching farm animals or their surroundings. When everyone has finished petting and handling the animals they need to wash their hands thoroughly using soap and water and to dry them before eating. “It’s also very important to remember that hand gels or wipes have their uses in areas that are generally clean, such as offices or hospitals, but they are not effective in completely removing from soiled hands bugs such as E.coli or Cryptosporidium that are commonly found in animal droppings and on contaminated surfaces around farms. This is why washing the hands thoroughly with soap and water is so important - it is the only way to effectively remove the bacteria and reduce the risk of becoming unwell.” Read more: <http://www.hpa.org.uk/NewsCentre/NationalPressReleases/2012PressReleases/120404farmvisits/>

11. Ofsted confirms that standards can be raised by learning outside the classroom

An Ofsted survey report recently concluded that:

- When planned and implemented well, learning outside the classroom contributed significantly to the raising of standards and improvements to pupils' personal, social and emotional development.

- Learning outside the classroom was most successful when it was an integral element of long-term curriculum planning and closely linked to classroom activities.
- The schools in the survey relied very heavily on contributions from parents and carers to meet the costs of residential and other visits and had given very little thought to alternative ways of financing them.
- The schools and colleges inspected had worked hard and successfully to overcome the barriers to learning outside the classroom, including those relating to health and safety, pupils' behaviour and teachers' workload.

Amongst other recommendations, Ofsted's report indicated that schools and colleges should ensure their curriculum planning includes sufficient, well-structured opportunities for all learners to engage in learning outside the classroom. It is also crucial that equal and full access to learning outside the classroom is ensured for all learners.

The revised school inspection arrangements introduced in September 2009 required inspectors to evaluate the extent to which pupils' enjoy their learning and achieve well. Education outside the classroom, in its various forms, contributes to an enjoyable and enriching education. When inspecting a school's provision, inspectors are required to evaluate the impact that its curriculum and teaching have on pupils' outcomes. Specifically, inspectors are required to take account of the extent to which a broad and balanced curriculum is designed and modified to meet the needs of individuals and groups of pupils, and the design, range and depth of the curriculum from the pupils' perspective. Clearly, a curriculum is only likely to have these qualities or attributes if it provides substantial opportunities for pupils to learn outside the classroom.

12. Ofsted highlight examples of good practice in schools where standards have been raised by learning outside

Ofsted have recently added an example of good practice on their website, which provides details of how St John's Roman Catholic Primary School in Southwark have raised standards by learning outside (Ofsted Ref: 120366 - 03 Dec 2012) This primary school regularly uses learning outside the classroom on its own site, in its local area and on visits and trips to provide rich experiences, promote pupils' safety, raise expectations and attainment for all and narrow the achievement gap across the broad curriculum. See weblink below for details:
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/good-practice-resource-raising-standards-learning-outside-st-johns-roman-catholic-primary-school>

A further example from Ofsted shows how Neston High School secures high attainment and levels of progress through a well-integrated curriculum with a broad programme of learning outside the classroom (LOTC). This includes many residential visits, day trips and activities in the local environment. A 'can do' culture, more than any of the formal systems, adds the most value to enabling students to achieve well and thrive. See the following website for details:
<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/good-practice-resource-learning-outside-classroom-neston-high-school>

13. Ofsted inspection reports confirm importance of educational visits and learning outside the classroom

Norfolk County Council conducted and published research into the comments recorded by HMI's during recent Ofsted inspections. In 2011 over 95% of the schools' Ofsted inspection reports included comments regarding the value of the schools' educational visits and outdoor learning experiences, including the following:

"Teachers make good use of the local environment and facilities such as the Norfolk museum, where, for example, children participate in historical re-enactments. The annual residential trip provides additional science experiences, and other trips, visitors and sports clubs enrich children's experiences"

"Visits and visitors to the school enrich the curriculum. Children in the Reception year benefit from good teaching and a range of activities that enable them to learn alongside older children"

in the classroom and outdoors. These children work well together and become increasingly confident and independent”

“Learning is also enhanced very effectively by an excellent range of additional activities and educational visits. A recent residential visit to an outdoor education centre made a very effective contribution to pupils' personal development. During the inspection children wrote about their experiences when visiting the nearby fairground”

“Considerable improvements since the last inspection include enhancing pupils' learning by trips out of school, which encourage them to explore topics in depth. The school is working hard to offer local schools outdoor and ecological activities and has supported others with the building of a greenhouse using recycled bottles”

“Their spiritual development is awakened by the experiences they have of the outdoors through a series of well-planned and skilfully executed activities, including a night walk in the woods, and toasting marshmallows over a camp fire. The school is popular with parents and carers, and recent developments in promoting outdoor education have been successful in inspiring pupils and contributing to their enjoyment of school”

“The staff make good use of the extensive and well-equipped outdoor space to develop each of the areas of learning”

“There are limited opportunities for children to go out on trips or visit places of local interest. This in turn affects children's links with the local community”

“Opportunities for nursery children to develop their play and learning skills are limited by lack of access to outdoor activities in all weathers. Too few outdoor activities are provided”

“Together with the use of visits and visitors this increases the relevance of learning for pupils. Pupils take part in a number of sports clubs, opportunities for drama and music making, learning other languages and gardening. The Year 5 and 6 residential visit is particularly enjoyed and serves to provide pupils with access to a range of activities beyond their normal experience and to strengthen the bonds between pupils as a group”

“Enrichment of learning outside the classroom through an extensive range of links to other schools and organisations such as The Royal Horticultural Society and the local superstore provide a range of exciting dimensions to classroom learning”

“A wide range of visits and visitors enliven the curriculum and staff expertise is used to the full across the school. The school's good safeguarding procedures are reviewed regularly and the school is rigorous in ensuring that the many visits outside school are carried out safely”

“Pupils have many opportunities for outdoor learning in the school's well-developed grounds. They take part with enthusiasm in a good range of sports and after-school clubs. Pupils' horizons are expanded by visits and visitors, and by school-wide themes such as the current multicultural focus in which each class is studying a different country. Good use is made of the outdoor areas for activities that often excite interest and foster imagination, as when, equipped with hard hats, fire engine and hose, children rushed to deal with a reported 'emergency'. Opportunities for children to initiate activities have been extended, particularly through the enrichment of outdoor learning”

“There is a stunning range of enrichment through many visits, special visitors to the school and days that have a special theme, such as India Day. During the inspection, pupils sailed on the Norfolk Broads, challenging their ability to work as a team with confidence to tackle unfamiliar activities”

“They are highly motivated by the wide range of visits, for example, to Norwich Castle. There is impeccable organisation of the stimulating inside and outdoor environment and children’s safety is paramount. The broad and well-planned curriculum provides a good range of enrichment activities, including high-quality music and a focus on outdoor-learning opportunities”

In 2012, 62% of the Norfolk schools’ Ofsted inspection reports included comments regarding the value of the schools’ educational visits, including the following:

“The school is aware of the need to broaden pupils’ experiences and has made good use of a financial subsidy to provide a wide range of enrichment activities, including after-school activities, trips, visits and visitors to enhance the curriculum”

“While there are visits to local places of interest, pupils tend not to be taken further afield, or for residential visits. This reduces the scope for pupils to try new experiences away from home, or to meet others from different backgrounds from their own”

“The curriculum makes a positive contribution towards pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example through offering an extensive programme of educational visits, including residential trips for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6. These develop pupils’ self-confidence and social skills, and introduce them to new experiences and challenges”

“The Forest School project and other initiatives, such as residential study weeks, help pupils to understand and marvel at nature and also to develop their confidence and independent learning skills”

“The curriculum is broad and balanced, and provides the pupils with interesting visits and activities, together with a broad range of extra-curricular opportunities”

“Outdoor lessons add a clear spiritual dimension, for example, when pupils make thoughtful observations about how the Earth regenerates and renews itself. Regular visits and visitors enrich activities and extend cultural awareness effectively”

“A good range of clubs, visits and visitors enrich the curriculum further. The school has extensive grounds, but these are not yet fully used by pupils for extending their learning in different areas of the curriculum. They normally use the outdoors under supervision and have few opportunities to work outside independently. Pupils are involved in undertaking risk assessments when they go on trips”

“The children make good progress because of good-quality teaching which develops their confidence and provides an exciting environment that stimulates learning both indoors and outdoors. Strong cross-curricular links are also seen in the best teaching with particularly good emphasis on developing literacy skills through outdoor activities”

“There have been improvements in the outdoor learning environment with the addition of a wildlife garden and observation mobile classroom. Their spiritual development is fostered through activities such as those in the wildlife areas of the outdoor learning environment, which promote a sense of wonder. A wide range of after-school clubs and the new outdoor learning environment are facilitating greater enjoyment for learning”

14. Memorable school visits and outdoor learning recorded by East Riding schools

There have been many excellent and extremely worthwhile educational visits organised by teachers from East Riding schools this past year. Educational visits of all sorts – whether day visits to local venues or expeditions to far-flung countries - can provide enormous benefits and learning experiences for the pupils. In my role as Educational Visits Officer, I am privileged to observe and monitor some of the visits that take place around the region, and I am always impressed by the standard of organisation and leadership of these visits. Well done to all those

involved!! The organisation of educational visits always involves a lot of time and effort, but the teachers who lead these visits know that the rewards are invariably worth it.

Below are excerpts from a newspaper report regarding an outdoor learning project – involving a number of educational visits - organised last year by Cherry Burton Primary School:

Pupils trout and about for project

“A unique school project has become a good catch for East Yorkshire’s famous chalk streams. Pupils from Cherry Burton Primary School have been rearing brown trout in their classroom. The youngsters released the baby fish into the wild at Scarborough Beck, which is part of the network of chalk streams. Excited seven and eight year-olds watched the fish swim off in the crystal-clear waters of the beck. The school has been working with the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT) and East Yorkshire Chalk Rivers Trust on the project over the past 6 months. The children took charge of their own fish tank, complete with a specialised chiller and pump at the end of January. They then monitored the temperature of the tank and watched as the eggs hatched and turned in to tiny trout fry. But the highlight was abandoning their desks on a lovely sunny day to release the fish at Scarborough, near Leconfield. Year three teacher Madeleine Boog-Scott said: “The project has been a huge success and the children have been so enthusiastic. They have been able to learn about a species they would not normally encounter in the classroom and use the project across a wide range of subjects, including maths, science, and literacy.”

Earlier this year, Beverley High School organised a visit to a school that they are linked with in Sri Lanka. Below are excerpts from some of the students involved:

“The people were so kind and welcoming and they all made sure that our trip was successful and of course enjoyable. I learnt so much whilst being there, just by speaking to people; I learnt how positive they are about life. They are very different from us in the UK, as money means nothing to them and it doesn’t make them happy. Realising this has defiantly made me more grateful and feel so lucky with what I have and am able to afford. Sri Lanka is beautiful but quite poor, however, in my opinion that’s what makes Sri Lanka so delightful and unique. I felt so honoured that we were the first girls to represent Beverley High at our linked school – Sujatha Vidylada” (Ellie Shingles)

“While I was in Sri Lanka, there were some scary things, like huge spiders, bigger than your hand, little housed geckos everywhere and massive multi-coloured millipedes crawling along the bathroom floor. Going to Sujatha Vidyalaya College, was a big culture shock, as they have around 5000 students, and about 200 teachers, there is around 50 pupil’s in one class, and if a teacher was ill, there is no supply teacher put in place, the girls would just get on and teach themselves”(Emily Allison)

“I really enjoyed my trip to Sri Lanka because of the people I met, they have changed my life, how I see things and I know one thing for sure I would do anything to go back and have that trip again! The amount of hospitality given from the people is unbelievable and even though I was thousands of miles away from home nowhere else could have made me feel more at home” (Lucie Wilson)

“Going to Sri Lanka was an amazing experience. I can’t really describe it. It is certainly a life-changing experience. The people who looked after us while we were there accepted us like daughters. While in Sri Lanka I met some truly inspiring people. Everything was unbelievable beautiful. I saw rainforests, tea plantations, and temples. While on the road trip, we went with about 30 girls and 5 teachers from the school. The atmosphere inside the bus that we travelled in was amazing. They sang songs, some in their native Sinhala, and some that we recognised, English songs. We also got to visit 4 student’s houses, the 4 who are coming to the UK in September. One thing I can say is that the culture there, well you can’t really imagine it. They

love to dance, and we got some dance shows from the school. The girls put 100% into every aspect of their life. I would truly love to go back there one day” (Francesca Brittain)

15. Lessons to be learned from accidents and incidents during offsite visits

The following are news excerpts regarding accidents and incidents that have occurred recently during visits involving UK schools, and the lessons learned may be helpful to all those who organise and lead visits:

Morocco fatality

Schoolboy, 17, died during a five-day-trek during a World Challenge expedition to Morocco. The boy collapsed and died in front of his classmates on a school trip to Morocco. Sam Boon was on the second day of a five-day trek with ten friends when he passed out in extreme heat. Attempts to revive the 17-year-old failed and he was pronounced dead shortly after being taken to a medical centre. Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2176756/Sam-Boon-Boy-17-dies-day-trek-school-charity-trip-129F-Morocco.html#ixzz21QwFw100>

Girl overdoses on travel pills

A police inquiry has been launched after a seven-year-old girl 'overdosed' on travel pills at school and began hallucinating. A police spokesman confirmed they were called about the incident and that they were investigating. He added the case was to be followed up by the Child Protection Service. The school has also confirmed they had put in new procedures related to non-prescription medicines. Read more:

<http://www.thisisplymouth.co.uk/Police-inquiry-Plymouth-girl-overdosed-school/story-16547292-detail/story.html>

Formby pupils turned school trip into drinking session

Merseyside pupils turned a school trip into a drinking session after getting hold of alcoholic drinks behind teachers' backs. The Formby High School students, aged 14 and 15, downed spirits and alcopops bought from a shop under the noses of teachers, a relative of one pupil claimed. The school confirmed the pupils had escaped suspension after the culprits apologised. More than 50 Year 10 students went on the four-day history trip to Belgium last week, where they had visited the battlefields of World War One. Teachers were asleep in the hotel when around a dozen pupils gathered in the early hours of the morning and drank the alcohol. Furious staff uncovered the empty bottles of alcohol during routine searches of the pupils' hotel rooms at breakfast time. Parents of the pupils involved were contacted to inform them. A relative of one boy said: "They found empty bottles of liquor and alcopops hidden in a few places. Many of the kids were drunk." Read more: <http://www.liverpoolecho.co.uk/liverpool-news/local-news/2012/07/12/formby-pupils-turned-school-trip-into-drinking-session-100252-31377406/#ixzz22IMcvcx4>

No charges in fatal polar bear attack inquiry in Norway

It has been decided that nobody will face charges following the inquiry into a fatal polar bear attack in Norway. Investigators found that tripwire flares failed to detonate when the bear entered the camp, despite being tested. See more:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-wiltshire-17237322>

Teacher banned

The disciplinary report said that the teacher led a dangerous walk on Striding Edge, the third highest peak in England, which is notoriously treacherous for walkers with a number of fatalities there every year, and allowed pupils to swim in dangerous open water during a visit to the Lake District between July 25 and 29, 2010, without the appropriate qualifications after assuming responsibility for the school's Duke of Edinburgh Award programme. See more:

<http://www.midsomernortonpeople.co.uk/Somerset-teacher-banned-endangering-pupils/story-13678597-detail/story.html>

16. The importance of outdoor learning and sensible risk-taking

The following are interesting news items about the value of outdoor learning and of sensible risk-taking:

Children should leave the classroom to develop a love of geography, says Michael Palin
Former Monty Python star said it is vital subject is made relevant and exciting. "We need to make sure that good teachers can fire the imagination of the children. I'm not saying that they don't have enough field trips. I suspect it's less now, there are all sorts of problems about taking children out of school, and the resources for the school itself." He added that it is important for children to see things for themselves. Michael Palin said that it was important that pupils saw things for themselves rather than on a computer. "You have to show them a mountain, show them a power station, show them a nuclear site. Geography itself is such a wide-ranging subject. It's really about the study of the surface of the Earth, it's relevant to every single thing we do - what we eat, what transport we take to work, where we live, what houses are made of."

Outdoor play - let our children take a risk - excerpts from Judith Hackitt's (CEO of HSE) blog

'When I think back to now to my own childhood in a rural mining village in Warwickshire, it strikes me how much of it was enjoyed outdoors. One of my earliest memories is playing hopscotch on the badly laid, uneven pavement outside our house. Not long after I recall tramping off with friends into the woods to build a dam in a local stream. A few years later, on holiday, I was learning to fish in rockpools with my dad, perched patiently on the slippery rocks hoping to get a bite. Playing outside was something my generation did, and we were better for it. Certainly there were times when we came home with cuts and bruises - or even broken bones - but when we did we brought something else back with us: a lesson about the world. If you fell out of a tree, it hurt. But it taught you either what not to do next time or that tree climbing was not for you. It gave you a healthy respect for the physical world around you, what risks you could reasonably take and what to do differently next time. Subsequent generations have it seems gradually been deprived of that connection with the outdoors and the education that it afforded them. When I speak to employers they often tell me that it is becoming increasingly difficult to find young people to take up apprenticeships who have the physical or mechanical aptitude of people they would have interviewed 10 or 15 years earlier. They haven't built a go-kart to race down a local hill, or repaired a puncture on their bike. In HSE, we are focused on health and safety in the workplace, but it is clear that attitudes to risk are formed long before young people enter the world of work. Play - and particularly play outdoors - teaches young people how to deal with risk. Without this awareness and learning they are ill equipped to deal with working life. Our health and safety system in Britain requires workplace risks to be managed, not eliminated, and gives people responsibility for their own wellbeing. We simply cannot afford to exclude outdoor play and learning from our children's education. Young people are curious, and they learn quickly. We should not deny them the opportunity to learn by taking risks. Seeking to protect them from every conceivable hazard, rather than sensibly managing the genuine risks they face, ultimately leaves them in harm's way, not to mention robbing them of memories that last a lifetime.'

National Trust report suggests that 'Nature Deficit Disorder' is damaging Britain's children

UK children are losing contact with nature at a "dramatic" rate, and their health and education are suffering, a National Trust report says. Traffic, the lure of video screens and parental anxieties are conspiring to keep children indoors, it says. Evidence suggests the problem is worse in the UK than other parts of Europe, and may help explain poor UK rankings in childhood satisfaction surveys. The trust is launching a consultation on tackling "nature deficit disorder".

"This is about changing the way children grow up and see the world," said Stephen Moss, the author, naturalist and former BBC Springwatch producer who wrote the Natural Childhood report for the National Trust. "The natural world doesn't come with an instruction leaflet, so it teaches you to use your creative imagination. When you build a den with your mates when you're nine years old, you learn teamwork - you disagree with each other, you have arguments,

you resolve them, you work together again - it's like a team-building course, only you did it when you were nine."

The trust argues, as have other bodies in previous years, that the growing dissociation of children from the natural world and internment in the "cotton wool culture" of indoor parental guidance impairs their capacity to learn through experience.

It cites evidence showing that:

- children learn more and behave better when lessons are conducted outdoors
- symptoms of children diagnosed with ADHD improve when they are exposed to nature
- children say their happiness depends more on having things to do outdoors more than owning technology.

Yet British parents feel more pressure to provide gadgets for their children than in other European countries. The phrase nature deficit disorder was coined in 2005 by author Richard Louv, who argued that the human cost of "alienation from nature" was measured in "diminished use of the senses, attention difficulties and higher rates of physical and emotional illnesses". In the UK as in many other countries, rates of obesity, self-harm and mental health disorders diagnosed in children have climbed significantly since the 1970s. The report advocates having teachers take children for lessons outdoors when possible, with urban schools using parks. It also says that authorities who cite "health and safety" as a reason for stopping children playing conkers or climbing trees should be aware that successive Health and Safety Executive heads have advocated a measure of risk-taking in children's lives. The changes in childhood in previous decades are now filtering through into adulthood, where levels of obesity are also rising.

The National Trust is now beginning a consultation period aimed at gathering views and examples of good and bad practice from the public and specialists. These will eventually be turned into a set of policy recommendations. "As a nation, we need to do everything we can to make it easy and safe for our children to get outdoors," said National Trust director-general Fiona Reynolds. "We want to move the debate on and encourage people and organisations to think about how we take practical steps to reconnect children with the natural world and inspire them to get outdoors."

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-17495032>

Nature deficit disorder 'damaging Britain's children'

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/what-we-do/news/view-page/item788564/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-17257562>

17. Environmental Learning Cards

A new resource is available for teachers and instructors of outdoor learning. The Environmental Learning Cards have been developed by the Outdoor Education Advisory Panel. The cards are printed in full colour and laminated for use outdoors. The pack contains 25 cards plus a full colour handbook with guidance on use. Ideal for use in schools, outdoor centres, and with groups of all kinds whenever there is interaction with the environment in an outdoor Learning context. The pack costs approximately £45 and can be obtained from Harvey Maps (email sales@harveymaps.co.uk tel. 01786 841202).