

Chapter 2 - Outline and Objectives of Visit

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS – see rest of chapter below for full details

- There should be a **defined purpose** for any proposed offsite visit.
- School visits in particular should have **clearly stated and justifiable educational objectives**.
- Insurance companies make clear that any **insurance cover provided through the LA might not be valid for visits that do not have justifiable objectives**.
- **A clear understanding of the visit objectives by all group members, parents/guardians and staff helps to maximise the learning potential and benefits of a visit.**

2.1 Why should visit objectives be clearly established?

- There should be a defined purpose for any proposed offsite visit, and school visits in particular should have clearly stated and justifiable educational objectives.
- The objectives and potential benefits of a visit need to be understood and calculated, as well as the hazards and control measures, in order to make a fair and reasonable assessment of the overall value of a visit, and to make an informed judgement as to whether a visit is justifiable or not.
- Visits with poorly conceived objectives are often inadequately organised and prone to accidents.
- Staff who clearly understand and appreciate the objectives of a visit are more likely to understand and properly fulfil their roles and responsibilities.
- Young people who clearly understand and appreciate the objectives of a visit are also more likely to be motivated, and to understand and comply with what is expected of them.
- Lack of purpose can lead often to lack of control and discipline, and this is often the cause of accidents.
- Misunderstandings regarding a visit's objectives can not only be the cause of disharmony within a group, but can also jeopardise the safety and welfare of group members.
- Insurance companies make clear that any insurance cover provided through the LA might not be valid for visits that do not have justifiable objectives. Schools in particular should consider the educational benefits of offsite visits, as they must be justifiable financially to both management and parents. The educational value must therefore be clearly portrayed in order for an accurate assessment of a visit's worth to be made.
- A clear understanding of the visit objectives by all group members, parents and staff helps to maximise the learning potential and benefits of a visit (for example, group members who spend time, in preparation for an overseas visit, learning about the culture, language and history of a country that they will visit, are likely to benefit infinitely more than those who go with no preparation or forethought.).

2.2 What are considered worthwhile and valid “educational” objectives for school visits?

- School Educational Visits might be organised for a number of valid reasons, and to achieve a range of worthwhile objectives, such as:
 - Personal and social development
 - Curriculum development e.g. Historical studies
 - Fieldwork e.g. Geography or Biology field studies
 - Language skill development
 - Outdoor skill development
 - Sporting skill development
 - Cultural awareness
- School Educational Visits should not be organised solely:
 - to satisfy the interest or wishes of staff members (“We would like to go skiing, but we cannot afford it, so we will organise a school visit”);
 - to appease the demands of young people (“Can’t we go paintballing instead, sir – it’s fun?”);