

## **OEAP EG: Transport; General Considerations**

Careful thought must be given to planning transport to support off-site activities and visits. Statistics demonstrate that it is much more dangerous to travel to an activity than to engage in it and establishments must follow any specialist employer guidance regarding transport. This is likely to be provided in a separate and more comprehensive Transport Policy. All national and local regulatory requirements must be followed.

General factors to consider include:

- Passenger safety.
- Minibuses and coaches must comply with regulatory and employer guidance on seating and seat belts.
- Competence and training requirements for drivers, including whether the driver holds the appropriate license.
- Number of driving hours required for the journey and total length of the driver's day (including non-driving hours).
- Capacity of driver to maintain concentration - whether more than one driver is needed to avoid driver fatigue and the extent to which the passengers will need additional supervision.
- Type of journey - will the visit take place locally or will it include long distance driving?
- Foreseeable traffic conditions.
- Contingency funds and arrangements in case of breakdown/emergency.
- Insurance cover.
- Weather and driving conditions.
- Journey time and distance from support.
- Comfort stops and access to toilets and refreshments.
- Group supervision.

### **Group Supervision on transport**

The level of supervision necessary should be considered as part of the risk management process when planning the journey. Whatever the mode of transport, group members should be made aware of the position of emergency evacuation exits, first aid stations and meeting points. The Visit Leader should also be aware of alternative routes or means of travel in the event of delay or cancellation.

Visit Leaders should plan the journey in a way that will address a number of travel issues. These include:

- When crossing roads as part of the journey, the Visit Leader should ensure that young people know how to observe the safety rules set out in the Highway Code and the Green Cross Code and are aware of direction of traffic flow. It is good practice for all the staff, voluntary helpers and the young people to be briefed on a common approach as to how group road crossings will be managed. Where available, pedestrian crossings, traffic lights and footbridges should be used to cross roads.

- Where keeping the group together will ease the problem of group supervision, the Visit Leader may need to arrange for seats to be reserved well in advance.
- Head counts should be carried out whenever the group is getting off or onto transport.
- It is particularly important that young people should be made aware of safety requirements and expected standards of behaviour when getting on or off transport at pick-up and drop-off points (particularly when using UK vehicles abroad) and when assembled in waiting areas.
- Whether traveling on buses, trains, ferries or aircraft, the Visit Leader should set clear expectations regarding the amount of freedom to 'roam'. Inappropriate behaviour can be a major cause of accidents to young people when traveling, requiring effective supervision at all times.
- Double-decker buses/coaches will require at least one supervisor on each deck. In any seating arrangements, thought should be given as to where it is best to place leaders, ensuring that the arrangements will support the management of discipline and adult proximity to emergency exits.
- Visit leaders should plan sufficient stops at suitable areas, ensuring these are operationally viable with any providers and drivers.
- In the event of an accident or breakdown, the group should remain under the direct supervision of the Visit Leader or Assistant Leaders. If the vehicle is in danger of being hit while broken down (e.g. if it is on the hard shoulder of a motorway or dual carriageway, or is partially blocking a road) the visit leader or driver should contact the police to provide safety support. Whether it is safer to keep the group on board the vehicle, or to disembark and wait elsewhere, is a matter that will need to be risk assessed on the basis of the specific circumstances. If the decision is to keep the group on board the vehicle, then it is recommended that the rear seats are vacated and the young people moved forward towards the front.
- Leaders should ensure that seat belts are fastened.
- Visit Leaders should consider whether it is appropriate for young people to wear a high-visibility and easily distinguished article of clothing.
- Young people should be made aware that they are not allowed access to the driving area at any time.

### **Hiring coaches and buses**

The Visit Leader should ensure that coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company. Such a company will be able to offer assurances supporting their claim to provide that which you have contracted for and will be able to direct you to other, similar users that are able to confirm this.

Professional operators of buses and coaches are legally required to be licensed. Establishments using operators to transport young people should seek assurances that the operators have the appropriate Public Service Vehicle (PSV) Operators' License and that operators have adequate procedures in place to deal with emergencies such as vehicle breakdown.

Visit Leaders should ensure parents understand that seating and seat belt regulations abroad, are not necessarily the same as in the UK.

If a group member requires a wheelchair, the Visit Leader should ensure that the transport has appropriate access and securing facilities.