



# The Highland Council and High Life Highland

## Excursions Policy and Guidance

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<b>Intended for use by</b>	All staff and volunteers delivering, managing and authorising off site excursions within HLH and THC



## Contents

### Section

Page

Contents .....	2
1. Purpose .....	3
2. Introduction.....	3
3. Guidance .....	3
4. Application of this Document .....	4
5. Technical Advice and Guidance .....	4
6. Excursions Management (Supported by EVOLVE) .....	5
7. Excursion Notification and Approval .....	6
8. EVOLVE Visit Plan Routing.....	8
9. Informed Consent.....	11
10. Deploying Staff .....	13
11. Risk Assessment.....	15
12. Activity Specific Guidance .....	16
14. Monitoring Excursions .....	19
15. Using External Providers .....	19
16. Insurance.....	20
17. Emergency Procedures .....	21



## 1. Purpose

- 1.1. This document seeks to provide the staff and volunteers of The Highland Council (THC) and High Life Highland (HLH) and other interested parties with an appropriate level of information on policy and guidance regarding all excursions and educational visits.
- 1.2. This document is supported by THC 'Learning for Sustainability Strategy' May 2016 and [Going Out There](#) the Scottish Framework for Safe Practice in Off-site Visits, The Scottish Government 2013.
- 1.3. This document, along with Going Out There, provides the necessary guidance that Care and Learning establishments and functions within THC and HLH require to successfully and safely plan, manage and evaluate all off-site excursions and education visits.

## 2. Introduction

- 2.1. Educational visits, excursions and all off-site activities are an integral element of formal and informal learning. They are provided by THC, HLH staff and volunteers. Such activities fully support THC 'Learning for Sustainability Strategy' May 2016 and the [Curriculum for Excellence](#).
- 2.2. This document aims to provide the structure whereby a balance is struck between effective risk management and successful outcomes. The employer (THC and HLH) has a legal duty to ensure that, so far as is reasonable and practicable, the health, safety and welfare of those it has responsibility for is maintained. It does recognize though that there are enormous educational benefits from young people and adults participating in excursions and educational visits. All staff shall therefore use this document and the guidance contained in Going Out There and are expected to adopt and maintain a pragmatic approach to planning and the risk management of off-site excursions and educational visits. While there may be practical management differences when supervising adults on visits, the same planning, safety and management oversight considerations should be applied as are applied to young people.
- 2.3. This document governs activities under THC and HLH governance. This guidance provides a diagram to assist with defining the governance for off-site excursions.

## 3. Guidance

- 3.1. This document confirms that THC department of Care and Learning and HLH formally adopt Going Out There as the core guidance for safety management of off-site visits. Other resources are detailed below and provide valuable activity management information and links.
- 3.2. Going Out There which is web-based and is accessible at [www.goingoutthere.co.uk](http://www.goingoutthere.co.uk) was written and produced by the Scottish Government, The Scottish Advisory Panel for Outdoor Education (SAPOE), the Health and Safety Executive, the Association of Directors of Education and Education Scotland.
- 3.3. The national guidance embraces the Health and Safety Executive's principles of sensible proportionate risk management by seeking a balanced view that considers both the benefits

and risks associated with visits and activities. HLH will work in partnership with the national agencies to keep this guidance up to date with new practices and lessons learned from relevant incidents.

- 3.4. Establishments shall adopt this document in full and review and update local procedures to ensure that they reflect the guidance in both this document and Going Out There. THC and HLH use [EVOLVE](#), which is a web based excursions notification and approval system. Documents embedded within EVOLVE are therefore to be used rather than tools appended to Going Out There. Establishments should avoid placing any additional requirements for visit planning and approval on their staff or visit leaders without a specific safety or quality rationale. They can do so confident in the knowledge that they are following good practice that is shared across the whole of Scotland.
- 3.5. In addition to this guidance and Going Out There other very valuable guidance can be found here:
- Links to all the above guidance and Outdoor Education specific support and guidance can be found on the [HLH Outdoor Activities web pages](#).
  - THC and HLH EVOLVE web pages.
  - The Adventure Activity Licensing Service ([AALS](#)) [guidance on activity group sizes](#) and risk assessment.
  - The Adventure Activity Licensing Service ([AALS](#)) [guidance on appropriate outdoor activity instructor qualifications](#) (pages 26 – 32).
  - The [Outdoor Education Advisors Panel](#) (OEAP) offers excellent advice for all off-site visits.
  - Driving & transport – [UK Government guidance](#)

## 4. Application of this Document

- 4.1. This document and the procedures and guidance contained are relevant where young people and vulnerable adults leave the establishment site / facility for any activity or visit under the governance of a THC Department of Care and Learning or a HLH establishment.
- 4.2. The guidance in the remainder of this document supplements that provided by Going Out There and other relevant references.

## 5. Technical Advice and Guidance

- 5.1. Establishments must ensure that staff are competent to undertake their role in the excursion, whether it is planning, risk assessing, approving, supervision or leadership. Staff must seek technical advice or guidance from an appropriate person where this is considered necessary. In relation to adventurous activities and as detailed in [AALA Guidance L77](#) 2007 paragraphs 22 – 28, staff should possess the technical competences required. Where evidence cannot be demonstrated by national qualifications, it should be demonstrated in one or a combination of the following ways and should be appropriate to the nature and level of the excursion:
- Hold an equivalent relevant qualification, for example one that is considered acceptable by an NGB.

- Evidence of having completed in-house training / accreditation, e.g. 'Walking and Camping Leader Accreditation' or a 'Statement of Competence' from an appropriate technical advisor all of which will have a 3 year renewal / review expectation
- Possess an appropriate level of experience, with comprehensive evidence / summary. A Leader Approval Form (LAR) can be submitted through EVOLVE to evidence this (LAR staff can only be secondary supporting staff).

5.2. Further technical advice and guidance is available through EVOLVE 'Resources' (including Frequently Asked Questions) and through line management. HLH staff should seek guidance from line management in the first instance. The following staff may be able to provide further guidance:

- THC Insurance Department - 01463 702417
- THC Community Services Transport Office - 01463 252911
- THC Additional Support Needs – 01463 702876
- THC Equal Opportunities - 01463 702094
- THC Health & Safety Advisor - 01463 703099
- HLH Outdoor Education – 01463 663808

## **6. Excursions Management (Supported by EVOLVE)**

- 6.1. EVOLVE is an online notification and approval system for educational excursions that is now in use by local authorities across the UK. THC have used EVOLVE since 2011. All THC children's services establishments, schools and HLH establishments must use the EVOLVE system where managing off site excursions. The system automatically sends notification of excursions required to be notified to the necessary approval staff within the establishment and where necessary elsewhere in THC and HLH.
- 6.2. EVOLVE is designed to be 'intuitive' and as such HLH Outdoor Education does not deliver EVOLVE user training other than that covered in EVC and VLT training. 'Frequently Asked Questions' (FAQ) can be found on the EVOLVE 'Resources' page and [evolvehelp@highlifehighland.com](mailto:evolvehelp@highlifehighland.com) should be the first contact for all EVOLVE administrative support. Guidance on EVOLVE roles and responsibilities can be found on the EVOLVE 'Resources' page.
- 6.3. All staff with responsibilities relating to off-site excursions are required to have an EVOLVE account. Staff accounts can be set up by the establishment Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC).
- 6.4. Information contained on EVOLVE should be sufficient for new users (staff, EVC and Head of Establishment accounts) to 'self-learn' although any guidance / peer mentoring will speed up this process.

- 6.5. Much of the terminology and the procedures detailed in Going Out There are reflected in EVOLVE. On completion of the sections of EVOLVE for a particular visit, an EVOLVE **Visit Plan** is generated which forms the minimum Visit Plan referred to in Going Out There. Additional documents can be attached to the Visit Plan such as parental informed consent, maps and risk assessments where necessary. Guidance on these attachments is contained in EVOLVE.
- 6.6. THC and HLH management regularly access the calendar function in EVOLVE, so establishments must ensure that dates are accurate and that date changes both those completed and planned are correct.

## **7. Excursion Notification and Approval**

- 7.1. The Visit Type categorization (below) is adopted, as detailed in Going Out There. This will so far as is reasonably practicable ensure that approval is granted by those best placed to manage risk.
- 7.2. The status of excursions must always be clear to all relevant parties. As detailed in Table 1 regular local visits may be recorded in a single Visit Plan – Visit Type A. A longer journey for an individual young person / vulnerable adult may however require an individual EVOLVE form Visit Types B or C. Activities such as fieldwork supporting coursework carried out in own time (and not accompanied by a member of staff / adult) would not normally require an EVOLVE visit plan; although personal safety guidance on general fieldwork should be discussed with participants.
- 7.3. The timely submission of a Visit Plan provides relevant persons within the approval chain with sufficient information to make a judgment as to the viability and appropriate safety management of the proposed excursion. Any queries regarding Visit Plans must reference the EVOLVE visit ID number. Senior management will be informed of late submissions. Where an opportunity arises containing an adventure activity and a Visit Plan and associated due diligence checks can still be adequately completed in time, establishments should contact [outdoor.education@highlifehighland.com](mailto:outdoor.education@highlifehighland.com) in order to ensure that approval can be granted in time.
- 7.4. Where a Visit Plan requires only the Head of Establishment approval i.e. non adventurous or residential it must be signed off prior to the activity start i.e. no requirement for the 10 day submission deadline.
- 7.5. Where a Visit Plan only requires Head of Establishment approval (as defined above) the Head of Establishment can add and amend dates. Where the excursion is adventurous or overseas dates can only be amended at local authority level ([outdoor.education@highlifehighland.com](mailto:outdoor.education@highlifehighland.com))
- 7.6. An EVOLVE Visit Plan needs to be created and approved as follows:

Visit Type	Visit Type - Detail	Frequency
A	Regular excursions to known local venues (multiple local venues with associated risk assessments may be contained on a single Visit Plan – this would not include excursions containing adventure activities)	Once a year
B	Forecast weekly / seasonal events e.g. sports fixtures, use of an indoor climbing wall or adventure activity programme	Once a term
C	All other situations	For each excursion; Where more guidance is required contact: <a href="mailto:outdoor.education@highlifehighland.com">outdoor.education@highlifehighland.com</a>

Table 1.

7.7. Where an EVOLVE Visit Plan details multiple days and multiple activities, such as an adventure activity programme the following will be required in order for the EVOLVE Visit Plan to be approved as detailed in Table 1 ‘Type B’:

- Details of staff, volunteers, freelance staff and providers that will have responsibilities
- Dates added to EVOLVE Visit Plan where known. Final possible date (end of academic year date) added so EVOLVE Visit Plan remains ‘open’ for additional dates to be added. Cancelled dates to be removed by contacting [evolvehelp@highlifehighland.com](mailto:evolvehelp@highlifehighland.com)
- Detailed programme attached to EVOLVE Visit Plan detailing planned dates, locations, staff, timings – accepting that final arrangements may change (due to weather, conditions, staff etc). New updated programmes can be added after approval as necessary.
- Risk assessments for all activities planned by the establishment are attached to the EVOLVE Visit Plan. Specific risk assessments focusing on the staff and participants for a given day should be created (and attached to EVOLVE where feasible).
- 24/7 emergency contacts are (as normal) provided with full and final details and are aware of any late back procedures. [This document](#) may be a useful format.

7.8. Approval by the appropriate person is granted where there is a clear Visit Plan that provides adequate information to those with the duty and authority to approve that visit. Where insufficient information is provided, a facility within EVOLVE allows the Visit Plan to be returned to the applicant for amendment and re-submission or a note can be added which will notify that action is needed.

7.9. Where visits are of a ‘routine and expected’ nature, local arrangements should be in place to ensure that the school office / establishment / service reception and when out of hours,

the two 24/7 contacts, are furnished with relevant information on the excursion. A simple 'booking out' sheet / book should be adequate and allow the two 24/7 contacts to collect relevant information from the office / reception on closure. An example of such an Off Site Excursions Form can be found on [this page](#). The following minimum information should be recorded:

- EVOLVE name of excursion and reference number
- Names and contact details of staff
- Names of young people / vulnerable adults (if differing from those listed in EVOLVE)
- Departure and return time
- Summary of plan / activities
- Book out time and forecast return time

- 7.10. Where the names of some staff and young people / vulnerable adults is unclear in the planning stage, names added to EVOLVE must be accurate (as far as is possible) when the excursion takes place. If this is not possible, details of all staff and participants on the excursion must be left on the 'book out' sheet with the school office / establishment reception and when out of hours, the 24/7 contacts. Such staff, taking into consideration GDPR and secure management of information, should have access to a plan / itinerary, parental contact details and an incident response plan. In the event of an incident, the 'book out' sheet will be required as part of the incident record and should be uploaded onto EVOLVE.
- 7.11. Where dates of an activity are unclear, planning staff should insert a 'future date' e.g. 31 December in a future year and the EVOLVE form whilst approved, will remain 'open' and the correct dates can be inserted. It is imperative that dates are correct in EVOLVE – in the future as realistic as possible and correct once the date has passed. When the activity is complete the 'future date' should be deleted. Dates can be amended by requesting the return of the Visit Plan, which is amended and resubmitted.
- 7.12. EVOLVE Roles and Responsibilities can be found on the HLH Outdoors web pages and in EVOLVE.

## **8. EVOLVE Visit Plan Routing**

- 8.1. THC has the overall duty of care of pupils during curriculum time and for anything that meets the definition of a trip falling under THC or HLH governance as defined within this document. During curriculum time the school has governance and must always approve an EVOLVE (Head of Establishment). Delivery may, at times, be undertaken by partners such as HLH and therefore routing of EVOLVE submissions must be in accordance with the process detailed in Figure 1.
- 8.2. If the routing is through THC EVC then 24/7 contacts must be those who can view the EVOLVE (school establishment staff) and the late back procedure reflecting the school Emergency Action Plan (EAP).
- 8.3. ASCs and YDOs should possess 'staff multi-establishment control' in EVOLVE. Their establishment will be AS or YD, but will be able to create an EVOLVE Visit Plan that follows a school approval route. They will be able to select the establishment at the start of the



'add visit' process. At the submission stage AS / YD line management should be informed via the 'additional notifications' option.

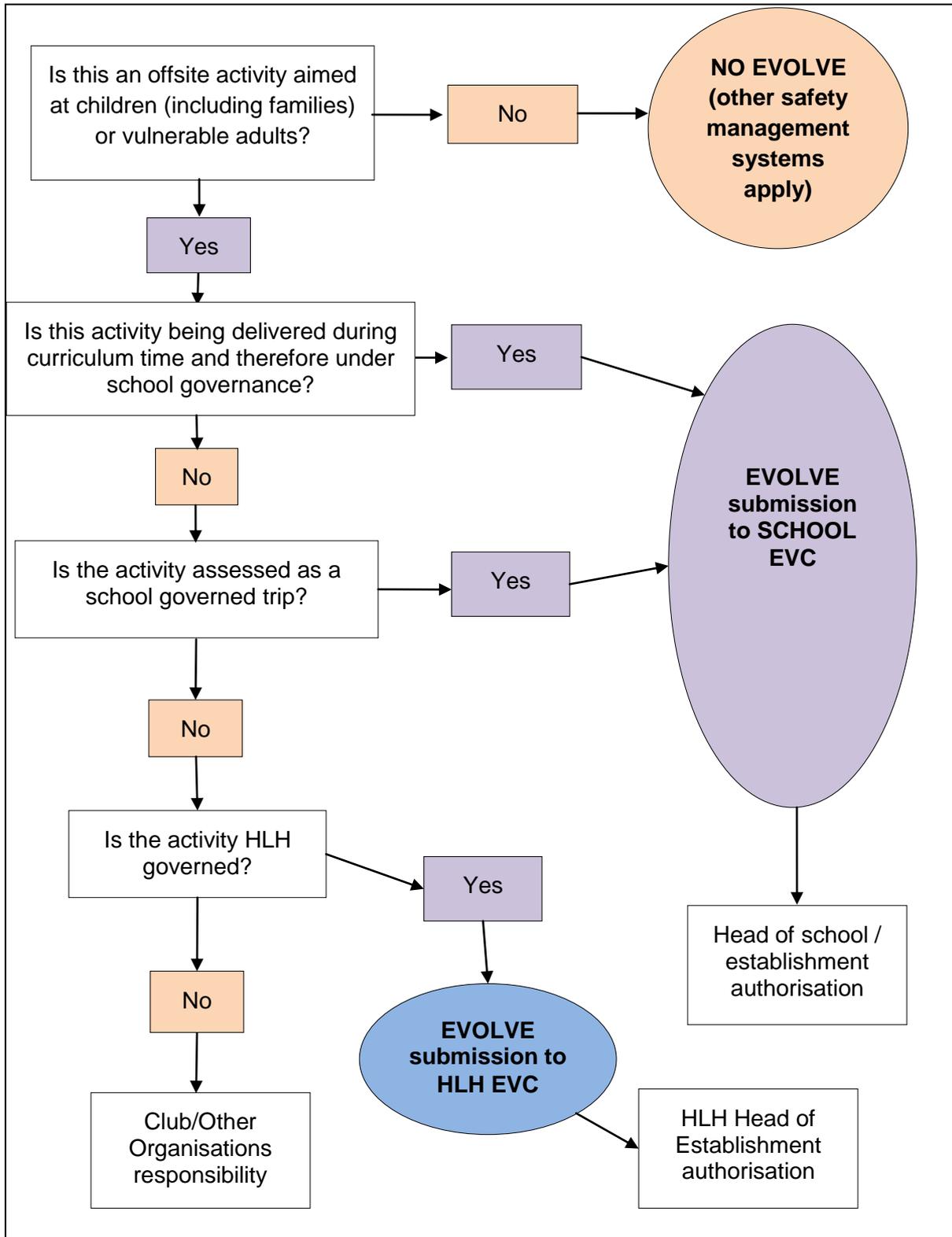


Figure 1.



## 9. Informed Consent

- 9.1. Parents / guardians must be informed on the nature and the detail of the excursion. Parental / guardian 'informed consent' should be obtained for all activities. Such consent should also include medical consent. Informed consent for 'routine and expected' activities can be obtained from parents / guardians annually / each term via a general educational activities briefing and consent mechanism. Visit Leaders must consider the management of sensitive personal information and establishments issuing information must ensure issued paper copies are managed in accordance with GDPR requirements.
- 9.2. As detailed in Table 2 below, the timing and content of informed consent will depend upon the nature of the proposed activity. Useful worked examples of documents can be found in the 'Toolkit' section of Going Out There.
- 9.3. When engaging adult staff or adult volunteers they need to be given sufficient information on the planned visit, activity, risks and their responsibilities in order to make their own informed decision on taking part. They should be engaged based on their competence and suitability to perform the task. This should be recorded in some manor appropriate to the activity.

Visit Type <sup>1</sup>	Information to Parents and Informed Consent <sup>2</sup>	Medical Information	Endorsed by	Final Approval by	Notification Deadline (working days)	Remarks
Routine and Expected visits <sup>3</sup>	During induction / annual approval / school handbook	Annual update supplied by parents or individual if adults	EVC <sup>4</sup>	Head <sup>5</sup>	1	Note. This is a change to previous policy
Day visits	Specific information provided in writing	Annual update supplied by parents or individuals if adults	EVC	Head	10	LA OEO <sup>6</sup> endorsement required for water margin activities <sup>7</sup>
Residential visits	Specific information provided in writing with parents meeting if required	Provided as an integral part of the consent form regardless of age	EVC	Head	10	
Overseas visits	Specific information provided in writing with parents meeting if required	Provided as an integral part of the consent form regardless of age	EVC Head LA OEO	EQIM <sup>8</sup> / HLH <sup>9</sup>	ASAP (but min 30)	Initial notification to LA OEO by 'Add Note' in EVOLVE asap
Adventure activities <sup>10</sup>	Specific information provided in writing	Provided as determined by the nature of the activity/s	EVC LA OEO	Head	10	DofE activities 30 working days

Table 2 – Visit Consent and Approval Matrix

<sup>1</sup> In accordance with Going Out There categorisations

<sup>2</sup> 'Informed consent' means a parent is clear on what is taking place, when, where, with whom and provides consent to their son / daughter taking part.

<sup>3</sup> Going Out There – 'Routine and Expected Visits' will generally be to local venues, involve easily managed activities, happen on a regular basis and be completed within the normal session times'.

<sup>4</sup> Educational Visits Coordinator

<sup>5</sup> Head of Establishment / HLH Area Sports Development Officer / HLH Youth Work Manager / manager of Care and learning service

<sup>6</sup> Local Authority Outdoor Education Officer

<sup>7</sup> Activities that involve interaction with coastal, lochside and riverside waters

<sup>8</sup> Education Quality Improvement Manager

<sup>9</sup> HLH Chief Executive notified of HLH overseas excursions

<sup>10</sup> Indoor or outdoor activity generally involving an element of physicality and generally involving a greater than normal level of risk due to a combination of the participants competence, activities to be undertaken and the environment within which the activity/s takes place.

## 10. Deploying Staff and Volunteers

- 10.1. The Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) requires employers to make training available for staff and volunteers to perform their work safely. Employers must ensure that staff and volunteers are provided with the necessary induction, guidance, training and advice appropriate to the level of activity. All THC and HLH staff and volunteers are expected to operate within their own experience and competence and are expected to seek guidance where this is not the case. Establishments are responsible for ensuring that THC and HLH staff and volunteer's competence is current and that CPD is carried out as required. Volunteers are insured by THC when they are deployed by an establishment. Establishments must keep a register of volunteers and details of competence (relevant skill, experience, qualifications etc) and evidence of a relevant PVG check if required.
- 10.2. As previously referred to in this guidance (para 5.1), THC and HLH staff and volunteers should be competent to fulfill a duty / role. Where an adventurous activity is proposed, all staff (THC / HLH staff, volunteers and sessional / freelance staff) must complete the Adventure Activity Instructor Induction and Registration form found on [this page](#) and in EVOLVE Resources. The form should be submitted to [outdoor.education@highlifehighland.com](mailto:outdoor.education@highlifehighland.com) and is valid for three years. All THC and HLH staff and volunteers that complete the form and submit to HLH Outdoor Education will have an EVOLVE account and will be responsible for ensuring that relevant qualifications are up to date. EVOLVE Visit Plans will not be approved where THC and HLH staff and volunteers qualifications are not in date and uploaded to EVOLVE.
- 10.3. For all excursions the deploying establishment is responsible for;
- Ensuring volunteer and freelance staff are registered with THC / HLH whichever is relevant and a PVG check is completed (where required) by THC / HLH whichever is relevant.
  - Ensuring volunteer and freelance staff are inducted as necessary into relevant establishment procedures. Depending on the scale of establishment induction may range from a brief discussion to a more comprehensive procedure. The induction might include:
    - Clarity on their role, responsibilities and status
    - Local establishment security procedures (wearing of ID, signing in and out etc)
    - Briefing on any relevant hazards and their control measures
    - Briefing on fire escapes and procedures
    - Actions to take in the event of an incident both on site and off site (where relevant)
    - Completion of any specific registration details e.g. Adventure Activity Instructor Induction and Registration form
    - Process for reporting concerns of any type
  - Ensuring that appropriate adventure activity insurance is held by freelance staff – covering activities (up to 5 million pounds) (where not THC / HLH staff or volunteer)
  - Ensuring that appropriate driver license/s are held by staff (where required)

- Ensuring that appropriate driving insurance is held (if using own transport)
- Checking references detailed on the Adventure Activity Instructor Induction and Registration form (not required for THC and HLH contracted staff)
- Ensuring adventure activity qualifications are relevant, in date and uploaded to EVOLVE (Outdoor Education can provide advice as required)
- Assessing whether a first aid qualification is required by staff for the excursion. All adventure activity qualifications require a first aid qualification which is in date and uploaded to EVOLVE and recording the outcome.
- Ensuring that any personal data is issued to appropriate staff, managed appropriately and returned / destroyed securely after the activity is completed. Any notes relating to the activity should be recorded securely

10.4. In addition to professional qualification and general risk management training, HLH provide training to Educational Visit Coordinators (EVC). Details on the EVC training can be found on [this page](#). Every establishment must have at least one trained EVC, larger establishments should have more. The EVC accreditation is valid for three years. The EVC is central to an establishment's off campus excursion safety management system. EVCs have the following key roles:

- Promoting Outdoor Education and Learning
- Managing and developing establishment local policy and procedures (supported by EVOLVE)
- Inducting, training and mentoring THC and HLH staff and volunteers (excursion planning, risk management and EVOLVE). EVCs can deliver VLT for THC and HLH staff and volunteers planning non-adventurous excursions (consists of pre-course work of 1 ½ and 2 hours course contact)
- Monitoring and evaluating THC and HLH staff and volunteers and activities

10.5. All staff planning excursions must attend Visit Leader Training (VLT). The VLT accreditation is valid for three years. Details on the VLT accreditation can be found on [this page](#). Training is required as follows:

- Excursions containing adventure activities – attend VLT delivered by HLH Outdoor Education
- Excursions containing no adventure activities – can be delivered by establishment staff that have completed EVC training within the last three years.

10.6. Staff, volunteers and freelance instructors are responsible for ensuring all relevant qualifications (relating to adventurous activities as well as EVC / VLT) are uploaded to their EVOLVE profile. This must include expiry dates where relevant. Failure to do so may delay an excursion approval. Establishment EVCs can add both volunteer and freelance

adventure activity instructors to their EVOLVE establishment list and supply those staff with a username and password.

- 10.7. EVOLVE provides a staff history of all visits lead or assisted and can record relevant training or qualifications which should follow staff across THC and HLH establishments. Managers are encouraged to use this visit history when deploying and mentoring staff. Records of visits are permanently recorded in EVOLVE. Staff accounts are not deleted from EVOLVE. When no longer required they are 'disabled'. Staff accounts are created once only and remain with staff if they move to another establishment. On departing an establishment the EVC should change the departing member of staff's establishment on EVOLVE.
- 10.8. The monitoring of visits is a critical part of the management and deployment process for establishments and serves to ensure that the planned control measures (contained within risk assessments) are being applied on the visit itself. HLH Outdoor Education staff will periodically monitor off site visits that have an adventure activity element either autonomously or when invited by establishments. This supports the provision of the Adventurous Activity Licenses that THC and HLH manage. Heads of establishments and service are expected periodically to monitor their non-adventurous visits.

## 11. Risk Assessment

- 11.1. THC has considered the general risks associated with a variety of excursions and identified appropriate control measures. This information is available to all THC and HLH staff and volunteers as generic risk assessments on the EVOLVE system, which will be reviewed annually / as required by HLH Outdoor Education staff. Generic risk assessments can be found on EVOLVE under resources.
- 11.2. Staff are expected to consult with generic risk assessments in order to create their own excursion specific risk assessment. The excursion risk assessment (using mnemonic PEA!) should be attached to the EVOLVE visit plan and will take into account the following:
  - **Participants** (specific considerations could include age, competence, support needs, medical etc)
  - **Environment** within which activities will transit and take place and how the people will be in those places (e.g. service station, mountain, ferry, accommodation, ski resort)
  - **Activities** and how the people will react / behave etc to the activities (from departure to return and within own competence and with technical guidance as necessary)
- 11.3. Establishments are expected to 'own' a bank of local area / regular excursion risk assessments which can be adapted to different groups. The principles of the excursion risk assessment are ownership and relevance. Hazards and control measures should not be repeated from the generic risk assessment unless they are particularly significant. A focused risk assessment is more valuable than an extensive risk assessment containing issues that do not present a risk of 'significant harm'.
- 11.4. THC and HLH staff and volunteers should only complete a risk assessment or seek guidance from one within their level of competence. Providers with specific competence will have their own risk assessments and where the activity is 'normal', or 'routine' there should be no requirement for THC and HLH staff and volunteers to scrutinize these. The

risk assessment process should be complete prior to an activity and should involve all parties with supervisory responsibilities. This means that the establishment staff must work with provider staff to ensure that both parties agree on appropriate risk management strategies.

- 11.5. When creating a risk assessment staff should use the template provided by THC (found in EVOLVE) or HLH (found on the HLH intranet). Staff should not use any other risk assessment template although the information in the Going Out There Toolkit examples may be useful.
- 11.6. Where an activity / service is being outsourced e.g. transport, accommodation, adventure activity, theatre visit etc, the Visit Leader may choose to consult with the provider to ensure that hazards are identified and control measures are put in place so far as is reasonable and practicable. Where an activity / service is outsourced there is a reasonable expectation of provider competence given evidence (see the previous section on 'Technical Advice and Guidance' and the later section on 'Using External Providers'). The Visit Leader on behalf of the Head of Establishment should seek reasonable assurances from external providers. Such assurances may be evidence of accreditation, licenses, insurance etc. If in any doubt the Visit Leader should seek appropriate guidance.
- 11.7. Any participants or THC and HLH staff and volunteers with significant medical or support needs, that require additional management arrangements to ensure their own safety or that of others, should have their own specific risk assessment. This should be attached to the EVOLVE visit plan. The risk assessment and subsequent visit plan may require medical / specialist input as well as parental consultation and agreement. The visit plan should consider all aspects of the excursion including travel, facilities and evacuation. Insurance advice may be required in some cases.
- 11.8. Excursion THC and HLH staff and volunteers should be in possession of all relevant details of the excursion and the people involved. Duplicate information should be accessible by the two 24/7 emergency contacts. This information may be hard copies or electronic. Local arrangements may vary.

## 12. Activity Specific Guidance

- 12.1. **General Guidance on Adventure Activities** – can be found in THC / HLH Adventure Activity Safety Guidance found in the EVOLVE Resources page and the HLH web pages. Further information can be obtained from National Governing Body (NGB) websites, associations and clubs.
- 12.2. **Adventurous Activity Equipment Guidance** – can be found in THC / HLH Adventure Activity Safety Guidance found in the EVOLVE Resources page and the HLH web pages. Establishments that have their own equipment such as but not limited to: static and mobile climbing and bouldering walls, kayaks, canoes, sailing boats, bikes, climbing ropes and associated personal protective equipment must carry out and evidence the following:
  - Inspect for serviceability (by a competent person), record, monitor and use in line with current legislative guidance and HLH/THC operating practice

- Store securely, in an orderly fashion with a clear system of identifying equipment that is for use and not fit / in need of repair
- Only deploy to competent parties

Note: Where an establishment uses equipment owned by another THC, HLH, club or association the establishment using the equipment must be assured (this must be evidenced) that the equipment is managed by competent staff. A pre-use check must be carried out by competent staff.

12.3. **DofE Guidance** – establishments submitting DofE related EVOLVE Visit Plans should consider the following:

- EVOLVE provides guidance on the approval route (EVC => HLH DofE => Head => Outdoor Education)
- DofE EVOLVE Visit Plans are required by Outdoor Education 30 working days before the expedition – in order to meet DofE requirements (see Green Form for details). If necessary information can be added to the EVOLVE Visit Plan after submission, but sufficient information is required to permit approval.
- A DofE check list for EVCs can be found in EVOLVE (Resources)

12.4. **Snowsport supervision** – as with other activities, supervision must be carried out by THC and HLH staff and volunteers that are competent, as detailed in in para 5.1. Where competence is demonstrated in extensive experience but no qualification and limited experience of managing groups undertaking snowsport activities led / instructed by third parties, THC and HLH staff and volunteers should attend Snowsport Supervisor training delivered by HLH Outdoor Education.

12.5. **The wearing of helmets and use of personal equipment** – In many activities, it is now common for NGBs, insurance companies, resorts and establishments to require participants to wear a helmet (and in some cases other PPE) when engaged in activities such as snowsport, cycle sports, skate boarding and paddle sports. THC and HLH require that all participants follow activity industry best practice. Young people and THC and HLH staff and volunteers are expected to wear a serviceable and correctly fitted helmet for activities such as snow sports (less Nordic) and biking. Safety critical equipment owned by participants; such as helmet, bike, harnesses etc must be fit for purpose. Any such item will be checked by the activity leader prior to an activity for serviceability.

12.6. **Swimming & water margin activities** – A risk assessment will indicate the level of competence required to supervise such activities. As with other activities THC and HLH staff and volunteers are to be able to demonstrate competence before supervising such activities and should refrain from unplanned water based / water margin activity until appropriate control measures are in place. Training can be coordinated or advice provided by contacting HLH Outdoor Education.

12.7. **Residential visits** – Staff should ensure that they and all participants are clear on security, fire safety and emergency evacuation arrangements. Signage must be clear and fire exits

must be clear and unlocked (from the inside). For unmanned facilities staff may want to add a fire drill. Further guidance is available in Going Out There.

- 12.8. **Overseas excursions** – Establishments involved in overseas excursions are advised to start developing an EVOLVE visit plan at the earliest opportunity. By the ‘**add note**’ facility within the EVOLVE visit plan staff can gain planning approval in principal and raise awareness with management and HLH Outdoor Education staff. The 30 working days’ notice required for EVOLVE submissions is the final approval date rather than an initial notification date. There is considerable guidance in Going Out There and a number of worked examples. Where exchanges and ‘home stays’ are a component of the excursion, establishment heads are to seek assurances that adequate background checks have been completed. Appropriate measures must then be in place to remotely supervise young people who, it is expected will be accommodated with other young people.

### 13. Supervision

- 13.1. Going Out There does not specify ratios for excursions as there are so many variable and contributing factors. Supervision ratios will vary according to the activity, age, group, location and the efficient use of resources. **Ratios are identified as an outcome of the risk assessment process.** However, a general guide for maximum excursion ratios is;

- 1 adult for every 6 participants up to 8 years of age (in school years P1 to P3) (Nursery classes should in most cases have a higher ratio)
- 1 adult for every 15 participants for other excursions (it is emphasized that the risk assessment will provide the appropriate adult ratio)
- Residential and overseas excursions will require at least 1 member of staff to 10 participants with sufficient numbers of male and female staff in attendance for mixed gender groups. This is a maximum ratio and the staffing must take into account the People, Environment and Activity and as such will often be less than 1:10. A useful overseas expedition mind map can be found in EVOLVE Resources
- Excursions involving ‘homestays’ should seek advice from senior management and HLH Outdoor Education as necessary as such experiences can be both highly beneficial, but can be unregulated. A useful exchange visit mind map can be found in EVOLVE Resources. Excursion leaders should consider the following:
  - Competence, suitability and vetting of the host establishment and any host families
  - Full and informed consent of all parties
  - Arrangements for communications (with all parties), monitoring and supervision
  - Clear agreement with all parties in terms of rules and conduct

- 13.2. For excursions that involve adventure activities the THC and HLH staff and volunteers delivering the activity or the provider used will be able to advise on the most suitable technical activity supervision ratios. Guidance on ratios can be found on the Adventure

Activity Licensing Service document [here](#). Ratios will very much depend on factors which include:

- Age, attitude and competence of group
- Educational or medical support requirements
- Competence of THC and HLH staff and volunteers, both general and on specific activities
- Experience of adults in off-site supervision
- Duration and nature of the journey and activities
- Nature of the environment (accommodation, transport, venue, local area, weather etc)

13.3. The establishment Emergency Action Plan (EAP) should provide both THC and HLH staff and volunteers on excursions and establishment 24/7 contacts details of actions to take in the event of an overdue group or individual. A 'late back procedure' can be found in the EVOLVE 'Resources' section.

## 14. Monitoring Excursions

14.1. The monitoring of excursions is an essential part of the excursion management process. This can take the form of 'table top' monitoring such as sampling or calling 24/7 emergency contacts, or it can involve visiting excursions and assessing whether appropriate and proportionate management is in place. EVCs should monitor excursions on a termly basis and maintain a record.

14.2. HLH Outdoor Education staff will periodically monitor excursions including adventure activities as well as visiting establishment adventure activity equipment resources. A report on the monitoring visit will be produced 'RAG' rated and submitted to appropriate staff including the line manager and Head of Establishment. Follow up visits will be scheduled where appropriate.

## 15. Using External Providers

15.1. A 'provider' is any individual or organisation that is providing a service (e.g. more than just instruction / coaching) to an establishment. In the context of this document neither THC nor HLH would be considered as an external provider to each other. Where using a provider, such as a residential centre, transport provider, tour operator or an adventure activity provider, the provider must be listed on EVOLVE (new providers can be added by EVOLVE users).

15.2. All adventure activity providers must complete an **Adventure Activity Provider Assurance** form found in EVOLVE Resources and on [this page](#), this is a 'self declaration' form. Providers that are HLH assured will in many cases not have been visited by HLH Outdoor Education staff, so assurance is based on the information supplied by the provider. Establishments must therefore be sufficiently assured that the provider is offering

a suitable and appropriate service and that governance responsibilities are clear i.e. who is responsible for what at any given time.

- 15.3. Provider assurances made to HLH Outdoor Education staff will be valid for a period of three years or when any provider makes 'major changes' to their operations. On renewal the adventure activity provider will be expected to complete a new assurance form – available on [this page](#).
- 15.4. Where entering into a contract with a provider, establishments should be clear about obligations and responsibilities detailed in the provider's booking terms and conditions that relate to the establishment, participants, parents etc. Establishments should seek technical advice (see paragraph 5.2 for contact details) as required.
- 15.5. Staff planning excursions using a provider requiring a 'participant disclaimer' should ensure that such disclaimers are supplied to parents / guardians. Such disclaimers should not be signed by THC / HLH THC and HLH staff and volunteers on behalf of parents / guardians prior to an activity or on arrival at the activity venue. This must be addressed in advance and parents must be issued with a copy of the disclaimer or a link to the disclaimer within a provider's website.
- 15.6. Where an establishment is planning to use a provider of overseas services (including planning exchange visits) a greater level of due diligence should be applied when selecting the host / provider. Overseas guidance is available in Going Out There. Staff are advised to seek advice early in the planning process as necessary from line management and / or Outdoor Education Officers. Equally, THC and HLH staff and volunteers should be satisfied with arrangements, including contingency plans put in place by such providers. Assurances from overseas providers could include:
  - Licenses such as ATOL, Learning Outside of the Classroom Quality Badge or compliance with BS 8848
  - Association membership (requiring adherence to national / international standards) e.g. Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA), Expedition Providers Association (EPA), The Year Out Group, Young Explorers Trust (YET)
  - A successful track record of working in a particular field / area
  - Positive and available references
  - In country provider assurances such as adherence to international standards, operating procedures, travel and accommodation standards, risk assessments and contingency plans

## **16. Insurance**

- 16.1. Guidance on insurance requirements can be found on the EVOLVE Visit Plan and via advice referred to in para 5.2. Establishment Heads should be assured of appropriate insurance cover for all off site activities. All stakeholders (including parents) should be informed of the level of insurance cover and / or its limitations.



- 16.2. THC does not provide insurance for overseas visits so establishments should source their own either through the visit provider or independently. For advice and guidance contact the THC insurance department referred to in para 5.2.

## **17. Emergency Procedures**

- 17.1. Every establishment in THC and HLH must possess a robust Emergency Action Plan (EAP) that details roles, responsibilities and guidance to establishment staff on incidents both on site and off site. Schools must have a 'School Major Incident Plan' which is only available on GLOW, under 'School Resources'. The purpose of the School Major Incident Plan is to provide initial response guidance only. Section 11 (page 16) gives information about school trip emergency procedures, while appendices B1 & B2 (pages 35 & 36) have contact cascades for during and outwith office hours (including holidays). During weekends and holiday periods establishment 24/7 contacts must be confident of actions to be taken in the event of a significant incident and where to report an incident and obtain support.
- 17.2. Excursions Incident Guidance can be found in EVOLVE Resources.
- 17.3. The effectiveness of the plan will be reliant on all relevant THC and HLH staff, volunteers and freelance staff being familiar with their responsibilities and having an effective and tested communication and response plan.
- 17.4. THC establishment head must ensure they are familiar with incident reporting procedures. The HLH guidance including the 'Trigger Matrix' can be found on the HLH staff website.