

### Ratios and Effective Supervision for Educational Visits

Establishments must ensure that the staffing of visits enables leaders to supervise young people effectively.

Decisions about the staffing and supervision should take into account:

- The nature and duration of the visit and the planned activities.
- The location and environment in which the activity is to take place
- The nature of the group, including the number of young people and their age, level of development, gender, ability and needs (behavioural, medical, emotional and educational).
- Staff competence.
- Staffing ratios are a risk management issue, and should be determined through the process of risk assessment. It is not possible to set down definitive staff/participant ratios for a particular age group or activity.
- In some cases there may be only one leader on a visit, or on a particular activity during a visit. If this is the case, young people (or any adult helpers) should be competent to manage in the event of the leader being taken ill or injured and should, as a minimum, know what to do to contact the establishment and get support.



Staffing, especially for visits to remote locations or overseas, should take into account how the group will be supervised effectively given the possibility of a leader becoming indisposed or having to leave the group, for example to accompany a sick child to hospital.

There is no absolute requirement for children to be accompanied by staff of the same gender, even on residentials, but if this is not to be the case then there should be a sound plan to manage the potential issues involved, including the needs for privacy, safeguarding and pastoral support.

A useful framework for assessing requirements for ratios and effective supervision is **SAGE**:

- **Staffing:** who is needed/available? The plan must work within the limits of available numbers, abilities and experience.
- **Activities** to be undertaken: what do you want the group to do and what is possible?
- **Group** characteristics: prior experience, abilities, behaviour and maturity, gender, any specific or medical/dietary needs.
- **Environment:** indoors or out; a public space or restricted access; urban, rural or remote; quiet or crowded; within the establishment grounds, close to the establishment or at a distance; and the ease of communications between the group and base. Do not overlook environments to be passed through between venues. For residential visits consider the accommodation and surrounding area. For outdoor environments, consider remoteness, the impact of weather, water levels and ground conditions. You can find further guidance in the documents:

- 3.2d "Approval of Leaders"
- 4.1h "Avoiding Accidents and Emergencies"
- 4.2a "Group Management and Supervision"
- 4.4b "First Aid"
- 4.4i "SEN and Disabled Children".

