



## Policy for Offsite Visits

Formally adopted by the Governing Board of:-	Caister Primary Federation
On:-	10 <sup>th</sup> March 2021
Chair of Governors:-	Rob Bush
Last updated:-	

The Caister Primary Federation has formally adopted, through its Governing Body, the Norfolk 'Guidance for Offsite Visits'. [www.oeapng.info](http://www.oeapng.info) and as outline on EVOLVE [www.norfolkvisits.org.uk](http://www.norfolkvisits.org.uk) Further procedures have been agreed with the Governing Body to ensure that this policy is adhered to.

### **Aims and purposes of Offsite Visits**

The Caister Primary Federation has a strong commitment to the added value of learning outside the classroom and beyond the Federation premises. It will seek to provide a broad & balanced range of Learning Outside the Classroom opportunities for all its pupils.

Each year the Federation will arrange a number of activities that take place off the Federation site and out of Federation hours, which support the aims of the Federation . The range of activities which the Governing Body has given its approval includes:

- Out of hours Clubs (music, drama, art, science, sport, homework etc)
- Federation sports teams
- Regular local visits (places of worship, swimming, other local amenities)
- Day visits for particular groups
- Residential visits
- Overseas visits
- Adventurous Activities.

### **Approval Procedure**

The Governing Body has delegated the consideration and approval of offsite visits and activities to Jonathan Rice. The Executive Head teacher has nominated Mark Parslow-Williams as the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) at Caister Infant & Nursery School and Gemma Cambridge as the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) at Caister Junior School. The Governing Body has approved these appointments and the EVCs have received training by the LA.

Before a visit is advertised to parents the EHT and EVC will approve the initial plan. The EVC will also approve the completed plan and risk assessments for the visit before departure. This will be undertaken using EVOLVE as the planning and approval system. [www.norfolkvisits.org.uk](http://www.norfolkvisits.org.uk)

The Federation has agreed a policy for categorising its visits in line with NCC guidance i.e.:

Level 3 visits must be approved via Evolve and the LA's on-line approval gained.

Level 2 Day visits approved at Federation level on Evolve by EVC & Head.

Level 1 Local regular day visits this establishment has chosen to use Evolve to record & approve all these visits.

### **Definition of Levels:**

**Level 3** = Overseas, Residential or Adventurous visits

**Level 2** = Day visits not in your establishments list of Level 1. [These must be approved on-line at Federation level on Evolve].

**Level 1** = Local & regular visits that you have generic risk assessments' & standard operating procedures for.

## **Staffing**

The Federation recognises the key role of accompanying staff in ensuring the highest standards of learning, challenge and safety on a Federation visit.

Staff are encouraged and supported to develop their abilities in organising and managing visits. There will be a system within the Federation to allow less experienced members of staff to work alongside more experienced colleagues on visits. The selection of staff for offsite visits will be a key priority in the initial approval of any proposed visit. Staff will be suitably qualified and experienced for proposed activities.

The Federation values and recognises the contribution of volunteer adults and parent helpers assisting with offsite activities and visits. Any volunteer will be approved by both the Head and Visit Leader and is entered on the voluntary helpers list kept by the Federation. They will be carefully briefed on the scope of their responsibility. Where it is appropriate the Federation will ensure that DBS screening is available for volunteers.

The appointed Visit Leader will be fully supported in the tasks required to arrange the visit. This will include, as necessary, making time or finances available to conduct an exploratory visit, briefing teachers and/or other staff, accessing training courses, reviewing and evaluating the visit or identifying time when the leader and EVC might work in partnership to undertake planning and risk assessments.

Visit staff will not be under the influence of alcohol or other drugs such that their ability to recognise hazards or respond to emergencies is in any way restricted.

## **Risk Assessment**

The Visit Leader will seek to identify any significant risks from any activity that is under their control and take appropriate steps to ensure all participants are safe. Good practice precautions and safety measures will be taken and this will be recorded in a risk assessment.

## **External Activity Providers**

Where external contractors are involved in organising all or part of the visit, the contract will be made with the Federation on behalf of the pupils. All payments for the visit will be made through the Federation accounts.

The Visit Leader will make appropriate checks before committing the Federation to the contract. This will include seeking assurances about health and safety, and any accreditation and licensing. Wherever possible the Federation will seek to use holders of the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge for which no Providers Contracts or other assurance checks are required.

## **Parental Consents**

Written consent from parents will not be required for pupils to take part in the majority of off-site activities organised by the Federation as most of these activities take place during Federation hours and are a normal part of a child's education at Federation. However, parents will be told where their child will be at all times and of any extra information or measures required.

Written consent will be requested for activities that need a higher level of risk management or those that take place outside Federation hours. The Federation has a standard form, which will be used for this purpose.

As part of the parent consent they will be fully informed of the activities and arrangements for the visit. For all residential visits parents will be invited to a briefing meeting where they can ask for clarification of any aspect of the itinerary and organisation of the visit.

The Federation has policies for Charging and Remissions use of Pupil Premium, Behaviour and Inclusion, which applies to all visits.

## **The expectations of Pupils and Parents**

The Federation has a clear code of conduct for Federation visits based on the Federation 'Behaviour Policy'. This code of conduct will be part of the condition of booking by the parents. Pupils, whose behaviour is such that the Visit Leader is concerned for their safety, or for that of others, can be withdrawn from the activity. The Visit Leader will consider whether such pupils should be sent home early and parents will be expected to cover any costs of the journey home early.

## **Emergency Procedures**

The Federation will appoint a member of the Senior Management Team as the emergency contact for each visit. All major incidents should immediately be relayed to this person, especially those involving injury or that might attract media attention.

The Visit Leader will leave full details of all pupils and accompanying adults on the visit with the emergency contact, including the home contact details of parents and next-of-kin, as appropriate.

All incidents and accidents occurring on a visit will be reported back and recorded following normal Federation procedures for reporting and investigating accidents.

## **Review by the Local Authority**

The Federation is supported in its arrangements for offsite visits by the County Council. Where necessary the Federation will seek advice from the Adviser for Outdoor Learning.

All visits that involve an overnight stay, going abroad and any that involve adventurous activities will be notified to the LA prior to departure. The LA will provide an independent reassurance check of the plan and the precautions and safety measures that will be taken.

Some sample monitoring will also be undertaken by the LA & the Federation agrees to facilitate this when & where required. Any advice provided will be fully considered prior to the trip taking place.

## **Charging Policy for Activities and Visits**

The Federation may invite, but not require, parents to make voluntary contributions for Federation activities in order to enhance what is otherwise provided. There is no obligation to contribute and pupils will not be treated any differently according to whether or not their parents have made a contribution.

The level of contribution will be calculated for each activity and may include, for example, an element to cover the participation by young people from low-income families or the cost of travel for accompanying teachers. Some activities may not take place if parents are reluctant to support it

The Federation will comply with the law in relation to charges that may be made for the cost of activities provided outside Federation hours, within Federation hours and for board and lodging on residential courses.

## **Other Federation policies that this Educational Visit policy relates to are:**

- Federation Charging & Remittance Policy
- Pupil Premium Policy (Which has to be outlined on Federation website) Guidance re use of Pupil Premium to support visits is in Evolve resources.
- Inclusion Policy
- Behavior Policy

## Old Ratio Guidance

### 3.3 Supervision

The factors to be taken into account when considering supervision ratios for visits include:

- the particular activity;
- experience of the group involved;
- the needs of individuals within the group, including those with special education needs;
- environment and conditions in which the visit will take place;
- experience of the staff;
- nature of the venue.

#### 3.3.1 Group Size Management

The maximum group size will depend on, environment, age and maturity of young people, level of supervision and qualifications/experience of staff. (See also Sections 3.3.2 and 3.3.9, Ratios):

- For schools:
  - When a visit involves whole class groups, the Visit Leader (the class teacher usually) would normally be responsible for the class, irrespective of size. With the group being subdivided as per the ratio.
  - When more than one class is involved in the visit it is good practice for a teacher from each class present.
  - When a cluster of establishments arranges any joint visit where there are only a very small number of young people taking part from each unit, ideally one member of staff from each unit should be included in the supervisory ratios. However responsibility for older pupils can be taken by staff from other establishments if agreed in writing by Head & staff member, planning is done as a joint exercise and ideally pupils have meet visit leaders in advance.
- There should always be enough adults to maintain effective supervision. The number required will depend on the factors set out above.
- When visits are to remote areas or involve adventurous activities, the risks may be greater and supervision levels should be set accordingly.
- Normally residential visits with mixed groups will need a trusted adult from each sex. Obvious exceptions may be groups of young (pre-pubescent) children with all female staff.

#### 3.3.2 Additional Supervisor - The 'Plus One' Rule

Norfolk Children's Services recommends that all larger visits it is good practise have at least one additional supervisor to cope with any unforeseen events/emergencies. This Leader should be free of direct supervision of a group, and can 'manage' the overall organisation, check road crossing, arrange easy group access to venues(queue jumping etc) Visit Leaders should apply the ratios listed then add one more adult. It is best practice for the Visit Leader to be in overall charge without a group enabling them to manage the whole party.

#### 3.3.3 Group organisation.

The Visit Leader has overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the young people on a visit or journey at all times.

All supervisors of subgroups must be aware of their responsibilities for the safety of the young people in their care at all times. Each young person must also know which supervisor is responsible for them or their group at any point in time.

Coach drivers and staff in museums, activity centres and at other destinations cannot be included in supervisory ratios. A teacher always holds the 'duty of care' and it cannot be dispensed to another person (see Section 4 for supervision of activities at specialist venues/centres).

### 3.3.4 Parents / Volunteers

Where a high adult/pupil ratio is required, it is not always feasible to use establishment staff alone. Parents/volunteers may be used to supplement the supervision ratio. They should be:

- Carefully selected and CRB checked.
- Ideally, well known to the establishment and year group.

Anyone who has not had a CRB check should not be left in sole charge of/or given significant unsupervised access to young persons. Such persons should not be used in a significant supervisory capacity on any residential visit.

The Visit Leader needs to be clear about procedures for vetting volunteers who wish to be supervisors or drivers, in particular for residential visits. The suitability of potential supervisors should be assessed by the Visit Leader and the EVC at an early stage of the planning process. Where there is any doubt about suitability, further investigations should be made and if any doubt remains the adult should not be allowed to help supervise the visit.

Similar considerations should be made for adults who have no supervisory role but who wish to take part in the visit, such persons may fall outside of some insurance policies, it is worth double checking that non-supervisory adults on any trip are covered by the policy you hold/seek.

The Education (Teachers) (Amendment) Regulations 1998, which came into force on 1 August 1998, made changes to the law with the aim of preventing people who are barred by the Secretary of State from being directly employed by an LA (Children's Services), school or further education college from getting round the ban by either:

- Working as a volunteer; or
- Working in a business that is contracted to provide services to schools, further education institutions, or young persons attending them.

The amendment means that List 99 checks should be carried out on volunteers and staff employed by contractors who will have regular contact with children and young people attending the school or college either on or off the premises. Voluntary Aided and LA (Children's Services) maintained schools can ask the LAs (Children's Service) to check a copy of List 99, which they hold. Independent schools and further education institutions can ask the DCSF to carry out the List 99 check.

HASPEV 1998

For the protection of both adults and young persons, all adult supervisors should ensure that they are not alone with a young person, wherever possible. If an adult on a visit will be in a situation where they become a 'trusted adult' in the eyes of the children they should be Enhanced CRB Checked as this is a grooming opportunity.

### 3.3.5 Supervisors' Responsibilities

All adult supervisors, including staff and parent / volunteer helpers, must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. In particular, all supervisors should be aware of any young persons who may require closer supervision, such as those with special needs or behavioural problems. Children's Services staffs retain responsibility for the group at all times. It is good practice to also discuss and agree a policy/code of conduct for staff, helpers & young people over such things as alcohol and smoking.

### 3.3.6 Competence if Leading an Adventure Activity

(Section 4 contains comprehensive guidance on Establishment Led Adventurous Activities.)

If the establishment is leading an adventure activity, such as canoeing, Children's Services or the governing body if the employer must ensure that the Visit Leader and other supervisors who are acting in the capacity of instructor are suitably competent to lead or instruct young persons in the activity. Competencies are usually demonstrated by holding a relevant and current National Governing Body (NGB) Award. At centres where a

licence is granted by the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) all staff leading the activities covered by the licence remit should be competent as they are assessed by AALA.

### **3.3.7 Head Counts**

Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of young persons should take place, particularly before leaving any venue. All supervisors should carry a list of all young persons and adults involved in the visit at all times. Young persons, particularly in school years 1 to 3, should be easily identifiable, especially if the visit is to a densely populated area. Bright coloured caps, T-shirts or a school uniform can help identify group members more easily. Young persons should not wear name badges but some schools find it useful to provide young persons with badges displaying the name of the school and its emergency contact number. The Visit Leader should establish rendezvous points and tell young persons what to do if they become separated from the group.

### **3.3.8 Remote Supervision**

The educational objective behind some visits for older young persons may be to encourage independence and investigative skills. As a result some of the time on visits such as trips abroad and while undertaking fieldwork may be unsupervised.

The Visit Leader should establish during the planning stage of the visit whether it is appropriate and safe to do so as part of the risk assessment process.

The Visit Leader remains responsible for young persons even when not in direct contact with them. Young persons must have the ability to contact the Visit Leader.

Parents/carers of young persons/young people should be told before the visit, whether any form of remote supervision will take place. Informed Parental consent should be obtained.

See Preparing Young persons for Remote Supervision, in Section 4 Adventurous Activities and Field Studies sections.

For Supervision on Transport see Section 3.6.4

### 3.3.9 Ratios

There are many factors to take into consideration when deciding supervisory ratios. Those approving visits will need to apply these as part of the risk assessment before a visit takes place. In particular, they should pay attention to the need to maintain a complete programme of supervision, for example, when the main group is split into sub-groups or when more than one educational establishment makes up the group.

Contingency plans must be available to cover withdrawal of one or more supervisors through illness or other reasons and to cover unforeseen circumstances.

#### 3.3.9.1 UK Day Visit and UK Residential Visit Ratios

For trips outside the UK see Section 4.7 Visits Abroad and for adventurous activities and visits to more hazardous environments as different ratios apply see Section 4.

These are Children's Services recommended minimum supervision levels for overnight stays and day visits where the element of risk to be encountered is similar to that normally encountered in daily life (for example, visits to historical sites, most field work, visits to places of local interest and local walks - excluding coastal or tidal areas).

The following recommendations are not intended to apply to curriculum activity for older young persons in the immediate locality of the school, e.g., shopping or traffic surveys, visits arranged in conjunction with the careers service, or to participation in traditional sporting activities. Heads in consultation with their EVC will need to adopt policies which ensure adequate staffing of such activities.

Day and Overnight Visit Ratios					Day Visit
Pupil Age	Nursery & Reception	Years 1 to 3	Years 4 to 6	Years 7 to 11	6 <sup>th</sup> Form
Adult/Pupil Ratio	Nursery. 1:2 - 3 Rec. 1:3 - 5 (see 3.3.9.2)	1:6 (see 3.3.9.3)	1:10 - 15 (see 3.3.9.3)	1:15 -20	1:20

Ages are included for vertically grouped classes.

**These ratios do not include the recommended additional supervisor recommended for large groups. (See Section 3.3.2)**

Mixed sex groups of young persons should normally have at least one male and one female adult. Obvious exceptions may be groups of young (pre-pubescent) children with all female staff.

Each group must be led by a competent Children's Services employee approved by the Head of Establishment, in the ratio of one such leader for approximately every 30 young persons. (See paragraph 3.3.9.2 for under 5s staffing).

Ideally at least 50% of the above recommended adult numbers should be employees, e.g. professional staff or learning support assistants, approved by the Head of Establishment.

The balance of adult numbers will normally be volunteers (parents, governors) approved by the Head of Establishment. Nursery and Reception classes may have a higher parent percentage.



Higher adult to pupil ratios are recommended for:

- younger children in the age range;
- circumstances of above average hazard.
- See factors for amending ratios 3.3.9.4

### **3.3.9.2 Foundation Stage classes - ratios**

#### **Nursery and Reception classes**

For children under five years of age it is recommended that, due to the especially high levels of adults supervision required, there should be at least one teacher or approved Children's Services employee for every 20 young persons, supported by a balance of approved adult helpers.

#### **Nursery Classes 1 adult: 2-3 children**

For under 5s the ratio of 1 adult to 2 children should be adopted in more hazardous situations e.g. visits to water, busy shopping and traffic areas. A ratio of 1:3 should be acceptable in normal situations.

#### **Reception Classes (or Yr R pupils in mixed age classes) 1 adult: 3 - 5 children**

Specifying an appropriate ratio for reception classes is particularly difficult. However, the ratios of adults to young persons should be used for activities which:

- involve younger children and those who are less sensitive to danger;
- involve exposure to greater hazards, e.g. adjacent to water or near traffic;
- involve fewer trained adults, i.e. depend on volunteer helpers with limited experience.

A ratio of 1:5 may be appropriate in environments planned for very young children which are free of particular hazards such as traffic and water and where there is no danger of children wandering into less safe areas.

### 3.3.9.3 Examples

#### Example A

Three classes of Year 8 pupils go to visit a historical site in East Anglia. It is an hour's coach journey away and the itinerary and journey will occupy the whole day. Two classes have 30 pupils; the other class has 32 pupils.

Following a risk assessment of the visit the school will decide what the ratios should be.

The school must provide:

3 teachers (the Visit Leader and the two other class teachers)

2 additional supervisors per class are required because the recommended ratio maximum is 1:20

Consider 1 additional adult for the whole group for emergencies

However, the nature of the activities at the site would influence other supervisory ratios. The school might decide to have additional supervisors to improve the ratios in order to facilitate sub-divisions of each class to take place.

#### Example B

Two classes of Year 2 pupils are to visit the local museum, a short coach journey away. One class has 30 pupils and the other has 28 pupils.

Following a risk assessment of the visit the school would need to provide, as a minimum:

1 teacher per class (one of whom would be the Visit Leader)

4 supervisors per class

(5 Adults per class based on ratio of 1 : 6)

Consider 1 additional adult for the whole group for emergencies

Total adults required for the two classes throughout the trip equals 11

If the pupils are to be split up into sub-groups at the museum, then supervisory ratios may need to be improved depending on the circumstances

#### Example C

A class of Year 4 pupils are to visit a local place of worship as part of an RE topic. It is a short coach journey away. The total anticipated time of the visit is three hours. The class has 29 pupils.

Using the ratio of 1 supervisor for every 15 (low level of risk through risk assessment) the school would need to provide as a minimum:

1 teacher (Visit Leader)

1 supervisor

Consider 1 additional adult for the whole group for emergencies

Total of 3 adults required to supervise the trip

#### 3.3.9.4 Factors when considering ratios for outdoor activities.

The ranges of group sizes suggested in this paper give an indication of what may be appropriate for the safe and effective management of groups across a range of activities at a variety of hazard levels.

The decision on the size of the group, from a purely safety standpoint, will generally depend on a combination of four main factors:

- Age, ability and probable behaviour of the group
- Prevailing environmental conditions
- The specific objective
- Staffing arrangements (numbers and competence)

The basic principle is that:

- **group size** (particularly where it differs from the 'norm') **should match the level of risk which remains (the 'residual risk') after all other control measures have been implemented**
- In other words, it's not just the nature, or level, of the activity that governs the size of the group – the age, behaviour and experience of the participants and the relative competence of the leaders(s) are just as important. If, after all reasonable, or available precautions have been taken, the activity is still thought to be at the upper end of 'acceptable risk', a more manageable group size is likely to be safer. Generally this means 'smaller', but in some instances (e.g., activities in remote places, or when handling some watercraft) a larger group, up to a point, may be safer.

In addition, there are likely to be other factors that need to be considered, such as:

- the aims of the session
- Issues relating to the quality of the learning experience
- environmental issues
- transport
- equipment available, etc

'Doing what everyone else does' (i.e. following accepted practice) is a common policy, and is generally a sound starting point. But common practice is not always "best practice", and it may not even be acceptable practice in some cases. More fundamentally the issue of group size can be approached from one of two opposite directions:

#### **Objective Approach**

Decide what is to be achieved (the objective), take a pessimistic view of the likely environmental conditions, identify the group and deploy leaders based on what is needed to succeed safely. For example, a school may plan an expedition to climb Ben Nevis in winter, and this objective in mind, a suitable-sized group, with appropriate leaders and equipment is assembled. Few organisations have the luxury of taking this approach on a daily basis, so most will have to follow a more: -

#### **Pragmatic Approach**

Look at the actual group (size, ability, age, behaviour, experience etc) that you have, and the availability of competent leaders and assistants, and then select an objective that is safely achievable on the day. For example, consider an outdoor Centre that has 3 staff, 36 beds, 3 minibuses and 5 open canoes. Whatever the weather or the nature of the group, if canoeing is to take place, it will have to be 1:12 with a particular instructor. So the venue is chosen so that a worthwhile session can happen based on what is safely possible – or it will be cancelled. Nevertheless, there is still be an absolute ceiling on group size, but putting a figure on this is difficult. The ability to carry out a quick head-count is often a limiting factor.

But with any approach, problems will arise if the group size is inappropriate for the particular task, the particular group or the particular leaders.

#### **Assistants, Helpers and other Supervisors**

The idea of a simple 'ratio' (number of children divided by number of adults) can be used to create the impression that supervision is better than it really is. In situations where, in addition to the group leader, there are other accompanying adults, one can broadly consider three different roles for these potential 'helpers', and this needs to be taken into account in any overall assessment of supervision arrangements.

**a. Deputy Leader**

Someone who is sufficiently competent to assume **all** aspects of the leadership role should the need arise.

*In this case, a group of, say, 12 with a leader and a deputy leader might reasonably be considered as operating at a simple leader/participant ratio of 1:6.*

**b. Competent Assistant**

Someone who can assist the leader, possibly under close supervision. Additionally, this person should have sufficient personal experience and competence in the activity, so that, in the event of an emergency such as the leader being incapacitated, separated from the group, or otherwise unable to continue as leader, they are able to:

- Look after themselves in the area of operation
- Recover the situation and take over as leader until the whole group are returned to a safe environment
- Find their way from the activity/incident site under normal conditions to a point where outside help may be obtained
- Use their knowledge of the emergency procedure relevant to the activity and if necessary, initiate such procedures

**Note:** the assistant is not necessarily expected to be competent to take over the full instructional or coaching role of the group leader other than to ensure that essential safety information is delivered.

*A group of 12, say, with a leader and a competent assistant are perhaps best described, in ratio terms, as 1:12 plus a competent assistant.*

**c. Responsible Adult**

Many agencies require that, in addition to the presence of a qualified leader, groups are also accompanied by a teacher, youth leader or other person identified as a 'responsible adult'. This person's primary role is likely to be of a pastoral or general supervisory nature.

Normally such persons are not required to have any experience of, or competence in the activity in which their group are taking part. They are often present to provide pastoral care for their charges, and to support the group leader with additional supervision in relatively undemanding situations where they themselves feel comfortable. However, if they are not personally comfortable in the particular activity environment (e.g. scared of heights, 'wobbly' in their kayak, claustrophobic underground etc) they can no longer be considered 'responsible', and may simply, in such instances, be regarded as an extra member of the group. At other times, their role may be crucial. In any case, they can only provide, in activity terms, very limited safety support to the group leader and their presence should not be used to justify an increase in-group size beyond that which would normally be acceptable.

*A group of 12, say, with a leader and one such adult may best be described, in ratio terms, as 1:12 plus a responsible adult, or in some cases, 1:13.*

## How to interpret the Example Table that follow

- It is not possible to offer one simple figure for either maximum **group size**, or for appropriate leader/participant **ratios**. Every day, every group, every undertaking, with every leader constitutes a unique event, posing unique risks. The management of safety in the field is crucially dependent on the leader being able to retain, or resume, control of the group at all times. As the size of the group increases, so this function becomes more difficult, and so the risk of accident and injury rises.
- Furthermore, there are usually two separate, but connected, issues involved in-group size considerations: **Safety** and **Quality**. Many National Governing Bodies recommend maximum ratios and group sizes, but these are often based partly on quality issues, such as the effect on the environment, the image of the sport, or the effectiveness of coaching. However, the tables below are based primarily on **safety** considerations, which is why they may, at times, appear to conflict with advice published by National Governing Bodies.
- What this table represent is an attempt to show the normal, safe range of operating **group sizes**. Crucially, they also show those indicators that would tend to require group sizes to be kept at the **lower end of the range** in order to maintain a reasonable margin of safety, or conversely, might permit group sizes to rise without causing unacceptable risk. The traditional idea of a 'ratio' is not used in these Tables, for the reason given on Page 2
- Where the table mentions 'smaller' or 'larger' groups, this normally refers to sizes within the stated range, which covers most of what happens in practice. However, given favourable circumstances, it is not unreasonable to expect that safe sessions *could* be run with groups whose size falls outside these ranges. Of course, in such cases, one would expect most of the indicators to point in the same direction.
- Whilst group sizes outside the given ranges may be appropriate in exceptional circumstances, it's equally clear that in many circumstances, an undertaking is unlikely to be sufficiently safe however small (or large) the group, particularly where leaders are relatively inexperienced, and/or where environmental conditions are particularly severe.
- Where, in the table, a leader is said to be 'relatively inexperienced', or operating under a local 'statement of competence' (without holding the appropriate National Governing Body award), it is nonetheless assumed that his or her actual level of competence as a leader, given other favourable circumstances, **could** be adequate for the chosen undertaking.
- Remember that it would be rare if **all** the indicators listed pointed in the same direction for any given activity session. Indeed, this would probably imply that the session was either too safe to be challenged (to both leader and participants!), or was too hazardous to contemplate.
- The individual weightings given to the various indicators will always be a very subjective matter, and a sensible decision can only really be taken by an experienced practitioner taking everything into account.

Activity and Hazard Level	Indicators for smaller group sizes	Range of 'normal' group sizes	Indicators for larger group sizes	Notes
<p><i>Example:</i></p> <p>Improvised Rafting (typically using barrels &amp; spars &amp; ropes)</p>	<p><b>Participants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• With special needs, including behavioural, physical or mental disability</li> <li>• Younger children (particularly &lt;10 yrs)</li> <li>• Lacking in water confidence</li> </ul> <p><b>Conditions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong winds, particularly off-shore</li> <li>• Presence of strong tidal or river currents</li> <li>• Choppy water</li> <li>• Winter temperatures</li> </ul> <p><b>Aim of Session</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To construct a raft <b>and</b> carry out a journey in <b>open or moving</b> water</li> <li>• Design &amp; construction is wholly in the hand of participants</li> </ul> <p><b>Venue</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is part of a bigger expanse of open water</li> <li>• Is a short section of slow-moving river with white water downstream</li> <li>• Is in a remote area, or has no easy access to shelter/transport</li> <li>• Banks (lakes and rivers) are inaccessible or hazardous for long stretches</li> <li>• Is unfamiliar to the leader</li> <li>• No powerboat is available</li> </ul> <p><b>Leader</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is recently trained and relatively inexperienced</li> <li>• Has no additional adult or assistant</li> </ul>	<p>6 - 12</p>	<p><b>Participants</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Older children (15+)</li> <li>• Responsible group</li> <li>• Some previous paddling experience</li> <li>• Water confident, strong swimmers.</li> <li>• Well equipped wetsuits etc</li> </ul> <p><b>Conditions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Normal water levels (if a river)</li> <li>• Summer temperatures</li> </ul> <p><b>Aim of Session</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To construct a raft and carry out a short journey in <b>sheltered</b> water</li> <li>• Design &amp; construction is guided and monitored by the leader</li> </ul> <p><b>Venue</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is familiar to the leader</li> <li>• Has regular access/egress points, particularly downwind or downstream</li> <li>• Has areas sheltered from the wind where the group can be contained</li> <li>• No particular hazards exist downwind or downstream</li> <li>• Has access to transport and/or warm shelter</li> <li>• Has powerboat rescue cover for whole group</li> </ul> <p><b>Leader</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has extensive experience of this activity with groups</li> <li>• Holds relevant qualifications in related Watersports</li> <li>• Has a competent assistant, and maybe a</li> </ul>	<p>There are no specific NGB awards for leading this activity, although holders of related RYA &amp; BCU awards are likely to have a general familiarity with the water environment and its hazards.</p> <p>Sheltered water found as part of a larger expanse of open water can present severe group management problems if the 'line' is crossed, whether accidentally, or on purpose, particularly on a cold, windy day and the group size is at the upper limit. It may be necessary to deploy a <b>rescue boat</b> if the proposed journey takes the group into open water well away from land. In this case the maximum group size will generally be determined by the ability of the rescue craft to pick up all participants at once (dependent on water temp, clothing supplied, and the max. distance from shore)</p> <p><b>The ability to carry out a quick, effective headcount is one limiting factor on the size of the group</b></p>

			responsible adult(s) as well.	
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Appendix A



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## Ratios and Effective Supervision

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;
- The consequence of a member of staff being indisposed, particularly where they will be the sole leader with a group for any significant time.

When planning a repeat visit or a series of activities, it is important to review the previous plan (no matter how well it worked in the past) so as to ensure that it meets current group needs and any other changes (e.g., time of year).

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.

Some employers, guidance documents and governing bodies do set out minimum ratios, but these should be regarded as starting points for consideration rather than being definitive, as they may be appropriate only where the activity is relatively straightforward and the group has no special requirements.

If your employer does specify minimum ratios, you must follow their guidance.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework sets out legal minimum ratios for all providers working with children aged up to five. The appropriate ratio during an outing is always likely to be higher than the legal minimum: as with other age groups, this should be determined by risk assessment, which should be reviewed before each outing. It is not unusual for a ratio of 1:1 to be necessary.

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.

During some activities, staff inexperienced in that activity may need to be counted as participants rather than leaders when considering ratios.

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. See OEAP National Guidance document [6q "FAQ – Staff Supervising Mixed-Sex Groups"](#).

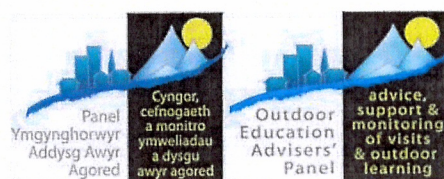
If a leader or helper is the parent of a young person taking part in a visit, there is the potential for them to be distracted by the needs of their own child when their responsibility extends to all or some of the group. This could compromise group management, particularly if there is a serious incident. The potential to be distracted can be avoided if a parent is not allocated a leadership role with direct responsibility for their own child. Sometimes this may not be possible (e.g., when a class teacher has their own child in their class). In this case consideration should be given to other ways to manage the risk, for example by ensuring that other leaders are available.

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

- **S**taffing: who is needed/available? The plan must work within the limits of available numbers, abilities and experience.
- **A**ctivities to be undertaken: what do you want the group to do and what is possible?
- **G**roup characteristics: prior experience, abilities, behaviour and maturity, gender, any specific or medical/dietary needs.
- **E**nvironment: 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. Consider the implications of current guidance about avoiding infection during an epidemic.

You can find further guidance in the documents:

- [3.2d "Approval of Leaders"](#);
- [4.1a "Avoiding Accidents and Emergencies"](#);
- [4.2a "Group Management and Supervision"](#);
- [4.4b "First Aid"](#);
- [4.4i "Special Educational Needs and Disabilities"](#);
- [4.4k "Coronavirus"](#).





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## Frequently Asked Questions – Must a Mixed-Sex Group be Supervised by a Mixed-Sex Leadership Team?

There is no absolute requirement for a mixed-sex group to be supervised by a mixed-sex leadership team. However, if this is not to be the case then there should be arrangements in place to manage foreseeable issues.

Factors to consider might include:

- the sex, gender orientation, age, maturity, ability and confidence of the participants;
- needs for privacy and safeguarding;
- needs for guidance and personal care;
- the length and remoteness of the visit;
- the nature of any residential accommodation;
- the planned activities;
- the availability of peer support or support from other adults (for example, from staff at a residential centre or hostel, or from another establishment sharing the same accommodation);
- the need for gender-specific role models.

Decisions about the make-up of the leadership team should be taken as part of the overall consideration of staffing ratios and appropriate supervision. See OEAP National Guidance document [4.3b "Ratios and Effective Supervision"](#).

