

DIOCESE OF HEXHAM AND NEWCASTLE
Safeguarding Department



RISK ASSESSMENT – GENERAL GUIDANCE

- a. Risk assessments should be completed well before the event/activity and should be approved by the event leader or, if completed by the event leader, by a suitably qualified individual. If in doubt, seek advice from your Safeguarding Co-ordinator.
- b. A risk assessment for an event/activity need not be complex but it should be comprehensive.
- c. A formal assessment of the risks that might be met during an event/activity should have the aim of identifying the potential hazards and then reducing them. Children and young people must not be placed in situations which expose them to an unacceptable level of risk. Safety must always be the prime consideration. If the risks cannot be managed safely then the event/activity must not take place.
- d. The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:
- (i) what are the hazards?
 - (ii) who might be affected by them?
 - (iii) what safety measures need to be in place to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
 - (iv) can the event leader put the safety measures in place?
 - (v) what steps will be taken in an emergency?
- e. The following factors should be taken into consideration when assessing the risks.
- (i) the type of event/activity and the level at which it is being undertaken.
 - (ii) the location, routes and modes of transport.
 - (iii) the competence, experience and qualifications of adult helpers.
 - (iv) the ratio and gender of adults to children.
 - (v) the group members' ages, competence, fitness and temperament and the suitability of the activity. **(CHECK CONSENT FORM FOR THIS INFORMATION)**
 - (vi) the specific or medical needs of children/young people **(CHECK CONSENT FORM FOR THIS INFORMATION)**
 - (vii) seasonal conditions, weather and timing emergency procedures.
 - (viii) how to cope when a child/young person becomes unable or unwilling to continue.
 - (ix) the need to monitor the risks throughout the event/activity.
- f. The person carrying out the risk assessment should record and give copies to all leaders prior to the event/ activity, with details of the measures they should take to avoid or reduce the risks. Parish priests or leaders of the organisation should also be given a copy so that approval, as necessary, can be given with a clear understanding that effective planning has taken place.
- g. Frequent visits to local venues such as a leisure centre may not need a risk assessment every time. Nevertheless, it is essential not to become complacent. A generic assessment of the risks of such visits should be made at regular intervals and careful monitoring should take place.
- h. The event leader and other leaders should monitor the risks throughout the event and take appropriate action as necessary.
- i. Before booking a day/residential trip the event leader should obtain a written or documentary assurance that providers such as retreat centres or tour operators have assessed the risks and have appropriate safety measures in place, including;
- Safe recruitment procedures
 - Adequate public liability insurance
 - A license to operate (where required)
 - Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for its staff
 - Child Protection policy

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RISK ASSESSMENT – SWIMMING

LEISURE CENTRES AND SWIMMING POOLS WITH AN ATTENDANT LIFEGUARD

- The pool's lifeguard will be on duty to supervise all swimmers. This does not reduce the duty of care the event leader and leaders have for the children and young people. All the leaders must constantly be able to account for the children and young people and should monitor the behaviour of the children and young people.
- Where possible leaders should consider using Leisure Watch facilities* or other approved activities. Further information on leisure watch facilities can be obtained from the Leisure Watch Co-ordinator on 0191 274 5858 or info@tdnorthumbria.org

PRIVATE SWIMMING POOLS

A private swimming pool may only be used under the supervision of a qualified lifeguard, and in the presence of at least one other adult, both of whom should stay out of the water unless there is an emergency. Supervision ratios must accommodate the needs of the children and young people and be increased as necessary.

OPEN WATER SWIMMING

Swimming or paddling in the sea or other natural waters should be allowed as formal and supervised activities, preferably in recognized bathing areas which have official surveillance i.e. qualified lifeguard cover. Nonetheless, children and young people should always be in the sight of their leaders. One leader should always stay out of the water for better surveillance.

The event leader, or another leader in the group, should hold a relevant life saving award, especially where lifeguard cover may not be available. For further advice, contact:

The Royal Life Saving Society;

River House

High Street

Broom

Warwickshire

B50 4HN.

Tel: 01789 773 994

When swimming takes place in a river, lake or the sea, the event leader will need to:

- consider the suitability of the water including the temperature.
- define the limits of the swimming area.
- brief the children and young people on any matters specific to the location e.g. limits to the area in use, other water users and hazards before they enter the water.
- adopt and explain the signals of distress and recall
- contact the local coastguard, harbour master, lifeguard or tourist information to obtain details of the nature and location of hazards.
- establish a base to which members of the group may return if separated
- look out for hazards such as glass, barbed wire and sewage overflows etc.
- ascertain for themselves the level of the pupils swimming ability and ensure adequate supervision rotas for the particular group.

* Leisure Watch is an initiative that is founded upon the premise that people in the community can play a part in reducing the risks posed to children by adults in the community who may harm them. Where the Leisure Watch sign is displayed, staff will have been trained to be observant and aware of the safety of children and young people and know what to do if they see behaviour which causes any concern.

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RISK ASSESSMENT – SPECIALISED ACTIVITIES

ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES USING LICENSED PROVIDERS

Certain activities when undertaken by children or young people under eighteen years unaccompanied by a parent need a license when commercial companies sell them, or when local authorities provide them without a charge. Caving, climbing, trekking and water sports (except rowing) are such activities.

The Adventure Activities Licensing Authority can advise about licensable activities.

Their address is:

Adventure Activities Licensing Authority

17 Lambourne Crescent

Llanishen

Cardiff

CF4 5GG

Tel: 01222 755 715

Fax: 01222 755 757

<http://www.aala.org>

The event leader must check

- whether the provider is legally required to hold a license for the activities it offers and if so, that the provider actually holds a license.

ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES USING NON-LICENSABLE PROVIDERS

Not all providers are required to hold a license. Commercial bodies and local authorities are exempt if their activities fall outside the scope of the regulations. Not holding a license does not imply a lack of safety. It might simply mean the provider or the activity is not licensable.

If proposing to use a non-licensable provider, the event leader should obtain assurances in writing from the provider that:

- risks have been assessed and that the provider's staff are competent to instruct and lead children and young people of the groups age range on the activity. Competence could be demonstrated by holding the relevant National Governing Body (NGB) award where it exists or through successful participation in an NGB approved in-house scheme.
- the equipment is appropriate and that its safe condition is checked before each use.
- operating procedures conform to the guidelines of the National Governing Body for the activity where this is appropriate.
- clear management of safety systems in place.
- there is appropriate provision for first aid.
- there are emergency procedures (including arrangements for informing next of kin and alerting the group leader); that the provider's staff are competent in the procedures and will hold emergency phone numbers and addresses of group members; that the group will have a fire drill as soon as possible on arrival at the provider's base.