

# EVC NEWS SUMMER TERM 2006

Electronic copy also available

[www.thornbridgeoutdoors.co.uk/educationalvisits](http://www.thornbridgeoutdoors.co.uk/educationalvisits).



Support for Educational Visits Co-ordinators in Sheffield LA Schools: contact Adge Last or David Armstrong at Thornbridge Outdoors, Great Longstone, Derbyshire DE45 1NY Tel: 01629 640491 Fax: 01629 640494 Email: [edvisits@thornbridgeoutdoors.co.uk](mailto:edvisits@thornbridgeoutdoors.co.uk)  
[www.thornbridgeoutdoors.co.uk/educationalvisits](http://www.thornbridgeoutdoors.co.uk/educationalvisits).

## INTRODUCTION

Please ensure that colleagues involved in the management and conduct of educational visits are informed about the contents and issues raised in this and subsequent EVC Newsletters.



## FEEDBACK FROM MONITORING VISITS

We have now completed a series of monitoring visits to secondary schools to provide additional support for the management and organisation of educational visits. These visits identified a range of effective systems in schools for supporting a broad range of high quality educational visits. This has provided valuable information and ideas that we can share with colleagues in other schools and some of the most important issues identified during the process are outlined below. These issues will, when addressed, help to make the process of gaining LA approval for visits more straightforward:



**Early visit notification:** During the last year the proportion of approval forms received at least six weeks in advance of the visit taking place has increased. This is the single most important aspect of gaining visit approval as it can be very difficult to exchange communications and act on advice at short notice. Visits should be notified to the school EVC/Head Teacher and also, where appropriate, to the LA well in advance (6 weeks where possible). Late notifications, whilst sometimes understandable, leave little time for support to be provided and acted upon, making a constructive dialogue potentially difficult in the time available.

**Provide all information requested on the Visit Approval Form:** the LA Visit Approval Form is designed to help with the process of visit planning – for use both when approving visits by the head teacher within school, and for LA approval. Where LA approval is necessary for the visit, the form requires assurances that certain arrangements are in place, but does not require copies of all the supporting materials. Many schools now have systems to ensure that all information requested on the form is provided, thereby easing the approval process. Please ensure that the approval form is completed fully and that no information is missed out, this will reduce the need to contact you to ask for clarification and missing information.



**First aid arrangements:** Many schools have introduced systems to ensure that staff taking part in visits have suitable up to date first aid training. The LA's guidelines for educational visits state that:

*“Risk assessment for educational visits must include consideration of first aid requirements: this will help to identify the level of first aid staffing and equipment which is required for the visit. At least one of the supervising staff on the visit should be a competent first aider.”*

It is good practice for staff taking part in the visit to have up to date first aid training, minimum - emergency aid. You should ensure that the section of the Visit Approval Form headed “First Aiders” contains an outline of your first aid arrangements for the visit. In your risk assessment you should consider whether you have someone in place to intervene directly who is able to provide basic life support should this be required. For example, will there be someone present who will do something if a child collapses unexpectedly or begins to choke on something they are eating. In these circumstances you may not have the time to call someone else by telephone to ask for advice. At a minimum you need to inform us who is the named person taking responsibility for first aid and what makes them competent to do this.



Individual educational visits should be risk assessed in respect of likely first aid needs and arrangements put in place accordingly. Bearing in mind the standard of first aid cover provided within the school environment, it would be anticipated that a similar level of provision would be provided during a visit.

**Reducing bureaucracy - supporting information is not required with the Visit Approval Form:**

Many schools have arrangements in place to keep copies of supporting information on file in school, rather than sending copies to the LA with the Visit Approval Form. As indicated above, the

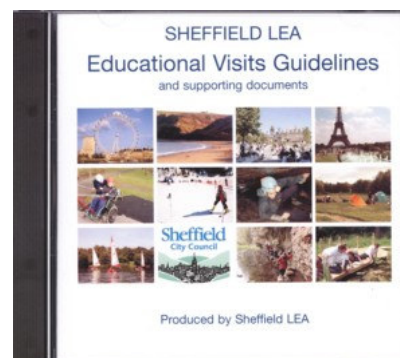


LA Visit Approval Form is designed to reduce the need to send supporting information with it when requesting LA approval for visits. For example, in respect of risk assessment, all that is required is a clear assurance that suitable risk assessments have been completed – there is no need to send us the actual risk assessments (you must, of course, keep copies on file in school for viewing should this be requested.)

**Making the LA guidelines and forms easily available to staff:**

Many schools have placed the guidelines and forms on their internal computer network allowing easy access to all the information required to plan and seek approval for visits. We would encourage you to consider this if you have not already done so.

**School record of activity leadership qualifications:** Some schools now keep records of staff activity qualifications along with copies of their certificates and other evidence. Schools which have staff who lead their own adventure activities, find it useful for the EVC to hold copies of relevant staff qualifications to help verify competence. This is good practice and helps remove ambiguity. Where you need assistance in interpreting or verifying qualifications you should contact the LA's Outdoor Education Advisers at Thornbridge using the details provided at the end of this newsletter.



## IN THE FIELD MONITORING VISITS

This summer term we will be conducting a series of in the field monitoring visits to observe and build up a picture of good practice which can then be shared with other schools. Priority areas will be school-led adventure activities and visits to coastal locations. When we wish to make an in the field visit, we will make initial contact with the school EVC and confirm the timing, purpose and nature of the visit along with providing notification of any documentation or other information we may need to refer to. Specific observations will be shared with the visit leader/EVC and more general observations from the series of visits will be shared with schools via future editions of this newsletter.



## NEW DFES GUIDANCE: SCHOOL STAFF AND THEIR ROLES BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

department for  
**education and skills**  
creating opportunity, releasing potential, achieving excellence

New guidance published by the DfES provides clarification of which staff can work on an educational visit. The guidance states:

*“Staff selected by the head teacher or educational visits co-ordinator (EVC) to work on an educational visit should meet a number of criteria. The category of staff is unimportant for the selection process - they could be a teacher, higher-level teaching assistant (HLTA), or another member of support staff (e.g. administrative staff). The questions to ask, and answer, are:*

- *can this member of staff fulfil the educational purposes of the visit?; and*
- *do they have the specific skills, experience and expertise to fulfil the supervisory tasks as assigned?”*

The full guidance document is available from: [www.teachernet.gov.uk/visits](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/visits)

## NEW DFES GUIDANCE: LICENSING INCIDENTAL DRIVERS OF THE SCHOOL MINIBUS

The DfES have published new guidance for staff who are not specifically remunerated for driving minibuses through their contract of employment. This new DfES guidance updates Chapter 6 “Planning Transport” in *Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits* (DfES 1998, supplemented 2002).

The full guidance document is available from:  
[www.teachernet.gov.uk/visits](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/visits)



## RECORD KEEPING



One question often asked is *“For how long should we keep records of educational visits?”*

We have been in discussion with colleagues from other sections within the LA on this issue. You may find the following statement helpful. The information is provided by SCC Internal Audit and is taken from their standard list of recommendations for schools on educational visits:

*“In order to optimise risk mitigation the following documents should be retained for six years from the end of the year in which the visit took place:*

- risk assessments;
- post trip evaluation;
- a sample of the information sent to parents;
- a list signed by two members of staff detailing pupils who actually participated in the trip.

*In the event of any untoward incident occurring during the trip then all original prime documentation relating to the trip, including the individual's parental consent slip, should be retained until at least the 25th birthday of the child, unless Sheffield City Council Legal officers advise otherwise. "*

You can see from this that the answer to the question is twofold: *for all visits – six years; for visits where an untoward incident occurred – until at least the child's 25<sup>th</sup> birthday* (children have until their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday to decide whether to make a claim following an incident).

## SCHOOL SKI VISITS

School Ski visits have thrown up a range of issues this winter. The main ones concern supervision of pupils skiing outside ski lessons. The LA's guidelines on this are clear:

*"All skiing, snowboarding and all other activities on snow must be led by staff qualified to teach/supervise the specific activity, usually instructors, nationally qualified, employed by the local ski school. Schools must organise qualified supervision for any skiing which takes place outside instructed sessions."*



This is set out in LA Generic Risk Assessment number 5. Ski Trips and in the *LA Guidelines for Educational Visits*, Chapter 16, Visits Abroad, page 64, under the heading Ski Visits.

The usual qualification which people gain to allow them to supervise skiing outside ski school is Snowsport England's Alpine Ski Course Leader (ASCL) Award, although there are a range of other suitable awards and methods of demonstrating competence.

Staff wishing to supervise skiing outside ski lessons must meet the above requirements.

The provider of last year's subsidised ASCL courses will be running the same courses again next winter. At the time of writing, course dates are available but prices have yet to be established. For more information go to: [www.interski.co.uk/ascl.htm](http://www.interski.co.uk/ascl.htm). If we are able to agree a course for teachers from Sheffield schools, we will contact you with details as soon as we have them.

## SCHOOL SKI VISITS MEETING



In preparation for next winter's series of ski visits, we will be holding a meeting for all those involved in school ski visits. The meeting will focus on LA guidance for ski visits; training opportunities for those who wish to organise such visits and for those who wish to lead their own pupils practicing their skiing outside ski lessons; and good practice in planning & preparation for ski visits. There is a broad range of experience of ski visits in Sheffield schools, this meeting will provide a good opportunity to share this experience with others.

Venue: Bannerdale Centre, Sheffield. Date: Tuesday 27 June. Time: 2.00pm – 4.00pm. If you are able to attend this meeting, please confirm by email to [info@thornbridgeoutdoors.co.uk](mailto:info@thornbridgeoutdoors.co.uk).

## GROUP LEADER TRAINING COURSES – FOR TEACHERS AND OTHER STAFF

Group Leader Training Courses are being held at Thornbridge based on the national training template devised by the Outdoor Education Adviser's Panel and supported by the DfES. This one-day training is intended for all those involved in educational visits and focuses on good practice in group management, and practical risk assessment in typical urban and rural environments. A certificate of attendance is available for all participants. Note: this course provides basic training in group management for off-site educational visits and does not contain specialised activity-specific content. Two courses - 21 June & 29 September 2006 at Thornbridge. Cost: £35 per person.

For further details and an application form contact: Dot Wales at Thornbridge Outdoors Tel: 01629640491 Fax: 01629 640494 Email: [dot@thornbridgeoutdoors.co.uk](mailto:dot@thornbridgeoutdoors.co.uk)

## NEXT EVC TRAINING COURSE

The date of the next EVC Training Course is Tuesday 13 June 2006. The course will be held at Thornbridge Education Centre from 9.30am – 4.00pm. The cost for attendance is £35 per person. This course is suitable for colleagues who are new to the role of EVC and/or those who are involved in the management of educational visits.

For further details and an application form contact: Dot Wales at Thornbridge Outdoors Tel: 01629640491 Fax: 01629 640494 Email: [dot@thornbridgeoutdoors.co.uk](mailto:dot@thornbridgeoutdoors.co.uk)

## FREE COUNTRYSIDE CODE EDUCATION PACK

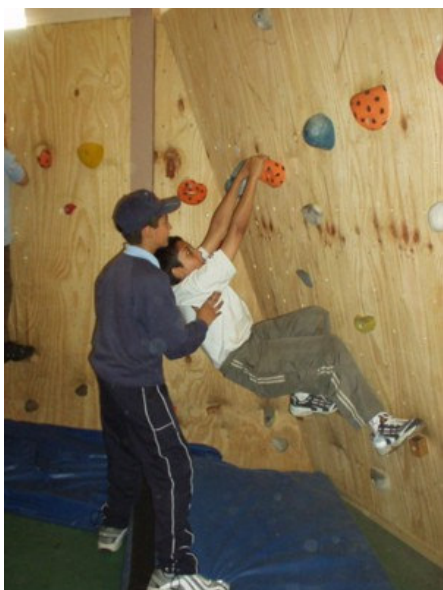


The government's Countryside Access website contains a range of free-of-charge downloadable materials relating to access issues including the opportunity to order a Countryside Code Education Pack containing an

extensive range of materials and CD.

For more information go to [www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk](http://www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk) and go to the section called "education resources for teachers and youth group leaders".

## GOOD PRACTICE AT CLIMBING WALLS



Do you have a climbing wall at school or do you have staff who visit climbing walls with your students? If so, you should consider the following questions: What are your arrangements for supervising students using the wall? How are your staff trained (training and qualifications are required)? If you have your own school wall, what are your on-going arrangements for managing the wall?

A national climbing wall supervisors award is currently under discussion. The MLTUK (Mountain Leader Training UK) are currently consulting on a proposed national Climbing Wall Supervisors Award scheme. The consultation is due to end on 12 June. If you're interested in the proposals go to [www.mltuk.org](http://www.mltuk.org) and follow the links on the left of the home page which lead you to more information.

For assistance with management arrangements for your school climbing wall, contact David Armstrong or Adge Last at Thornbridge using the details provided at the end of this newsletter.

## VISITS TAKING PLACE WITHOUT LA APPROVAL



We are aware that, very occasionally, visits requiring LA approval take place without it being gained in time. Common reasons for this appear to be very late notification, often linked to inadequate information. Should there be a serious incident on a visit which has taken place without the school obtaining the required LA approval beforehand, this may place the school in a difficult position during any subsequent enquiry and investigation.

*Visit Leaders, EVCs and Head Teachers must therefore take the initiative to ensure that, when LA approval is required for a visit, such approval is actively obtained prior to the visit taking place.*

You should remind all staff that it is the policy of Sheffield LA that, for visits involving **adventurous activity, residential experience, visits abroad** and visits involving other **hazardous activities or environments**, LA approval must be obtained well in advance of the visit taking place. You

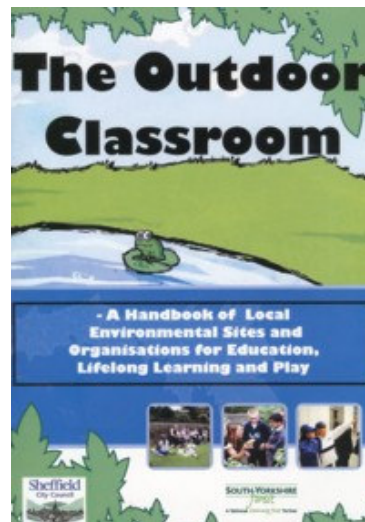
should remind colleagues that this is not optional. It is a legal requirement that employers' guidance is followed for all aspects of schools' work, including educational visits.

For further information and a clear statement of this position, see the DfES publication *Health and Safety - Responsibilities and Powers*, published in 2001. This is a statutory guidance document. A copy is available on the *Educational Visits Guidelines* CD, which was sent to all schools in January 2005.

## NEW HANDBOOK: ENVIRONMENTAL SITES & ORGANISATIONS IN SOUTH YORKSHIRE

*The Outdoor Classroom – A Handbook of Local Environmental Sites and Organisations for Education, Lifelong Learning and Play*, has just been published by the South Yorkshire Forest Partnership. It contains details of farms and animal centres; outdoor education and environmental studies centres; heritage woodlands; country parks and nature reserves; wildlife trust nature reserves; and heritage sites which provide learning and play opportunities for young people. All schools have been sent three copies of the booklet and a pdf version will soon be available on the Yorkshire Forest website: [www.greensites.co.uk](http://www.greensites.co.uk).

Further copies of the booklet are available from Ann Turner at Bannerdale Centre: [anne.turner@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:anne.turner@sheffield.gov.uk). For more information about the booklet or to add an entry to the next edition, contact Peter Machan, Education Officer, South Yorkshire Forest Partnership Tel: 0114 2571199 Email: [peter.machan@syforest.co.uk](mailto:peter.machan@syforest.co.uk).



## FURTHER INFORMATION

*If you require any further support, advice or guidance in relation to educational visits and activities, please do not hesitate to contact Adge Last or David Armstrong at Thornbridge Outdoors using the contact details provided at the top of this newsletter.*

## TRAINING COURSES 2006

The following training courses are planned to be run by Thornbridge Outdoors during 2006. Please share this information with staff who may be interested in any of these courses.

### EVC & GROUP LEADER TRAINING

#### **Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) Training**

13 June; 7 December

Cost: (Sheffield Schools) £30

#### **Leader Training for Off-Site Activity & Educational Visits**

21 June; 29 September

Cost: (Sheffield Schools) £30

### IN-HOUSE TRAINING

#### **Thornbridge Familiarisation Courses**

1-day events – 9.30am-4.00pm. Please ring 01629 640491 for autumn term course dates

Cost: (Sheffield Schools) Free; (Others) £20

#### **Thornbridge Low Ropes Course Endorsement**

9 June; Please ring 01629 640491 for autumn term course dates

Cost: (Sheffield Schools) Free; (Others) £20

### FIRST AID

**Note:** First aid courses – ½ day, one day, two days – can be provided for you in response to demand if you have sufficient numbers.

#### **2 Day Rescue & Emergency Care**

22-23 June

Cost: (Sheffield Schools) £90; (Others) £100

Please ring 01629 640491 for autumn term course dates or to discuss arranging your own course

### OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP TRAINING

#### **MLTE Single Pitch Award (SPA) Training and Assessment**

13-14 May; 17-18 June; 9-10 September; 7-8 October

Training: £95 Assessment: £110

#### **MLTE Walking Group Leader (WGL) Training and Assessment**

29 April-1 May; 21-23 October

Training: £165 Assessment: £185

#### **MLTE Mountain Leader Award (ML) Training and Assessment**

2x3 days: 29 April-1 May and 27-29 May

1x6 days: 21-26 October

Training: £320 Assessment: £345

#### **OTC Mountain Biking Leader and Skills Training and Assessment**

9-11 June; 13-15 October

Trail Leader Training & Assessment: £260

Technical Leader Training: £235

## SHEFFIELD LA OUTDOOR AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTRES

### THORNBRIDGE OUTDOORS

**Location:** Situated in 55 acres of grounds, close to the Monsal Trail in the White Peak, 2 miles from Bakewell and less than 30 minutes from Sheffield.

**Facilities:** Two self-contained residential units, Wyedale Lodge and Wyedale Farm, as well as a Campsite that can accommodate up to 40 people.

**The Lodge** accommodates a maximum of 32 people in 9 bedrooms with a dining room/kitchen, classroom/meeting room, shared recreation room and ample toilets, showers and washbasins. The kitchen is fully equipped, bedding is provided and the building is centrally heated. This building is fully wheelchair accessible.

**Wyedale Farm** is a Grade 2 listed 19th Century building with a charming roundhouse attached, accommodating a maximum of 29 people in seven bedrooms. Spacious dining room, fully equipped kitchen, showers, toilets and washbasins and a shared recreation/meeting room. Bedding is provided and all rooms are centrally heated.

**Wyedale Camp:** a beautifully situated and sheltered campsite with showers, washbasins and toilets. An added attraction of Wyedale Camp is the option of booking the Camp Block which has a large fully equipped dining room/kitchen.

**Bookings:** for bookings enquiries and further information, contact Jill Lomas Tel: 01629 640491, [info@thornbridgeoutdoors.co.uk](mailto:info@thornbridgeoutdoors.co.uk) or visit the website [www.thornbridgeoutdoors.co.uk](http://www.thornbridgeoutdoors.co.uk)

**Centre Manager:** Aidge Last, Thornbridge Education Centre, Great Longstone, Bakewell, Derbyshire DE45 1NY.

### MAYFIELD ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES CENTRE

**Situated in the heart of the rural Mayfield Valley**, on the very edge of Sheffield, is an old Victorian village school, built in 1875. Since 1971 this has been the home of Mayfield Environmental Education Centre, providing countryside experience for Sheffield City children. The Centre is surrounded by a great diversity of habitat making it a superb location for environmental education and specific studies related to the National Curriculum

**Mayfield Centre provides:** Classroom facilities for up to 70 children; outdoor clothing and wellingtons for children and adults; fieldwork equipment; reference materials, slides, photographs and follow up activities; ground floor facilities accessible to wheelchair users; hot mid-day meals; coach transport to and from the Centre at a competitive price; training courses for teachers/leaders; a loan service for schools including photographs, goggles and fieldwork equipment.

**Bookings:** made annually in February / March for the following school year. Telephone enquiries for vacancies are welcome any time.

**Current Centre charges:** Centre charge: £2.50 per child per day (£1.25 in December & January) free of charge for teachers and accompanying adults; Transport: £95 per day ~ 53 seater coach (own transport arrangements if preferred); Meals: Normal school meals price or free where applicable; Loan service: £25 per school year

**Contact:** Jane Walker, Centre Manager, Mayfield Environmental Education Centre, David Lane, Sheffield S10 4PH. Telephone and Fax: 0114 2303119. Email: [MayfieldEnvironmental@Centre-Sheffield.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:MayfieldEnvironmental@Centre-Sheffield.fsnet.co.uk)

### WHIRLOW HALL FARM

**Schools within the Sheffield LEA have special rights for access to the farm** as a learning tool for their children. A fully trained education department can deal with requests to bring pupils to an exciting working farm on the edge of the Peak District National Park.

**Facilities:** 130 acre mixed farm. Staff are available to support visiting groups. Classrooms, exhibition area, audio-visual room, livestock sheds, poultry sheds, pig unit and farm trails, all wheelchair accessible. Access trailer. Teaching resources including aerial photographs, OS map, seasonal videos of farm. Two residential units, one designed for groups with disabilities.

**Bookings:** All visits must be pre-booked using the contact details provided below.

**Centre charges:** Services are delivered free of charge or for a nominal fee. The centre relies on charitable donations to continue to provide a service. If you would like to support Whirlow Hall Farm, please phone 0114 235 2678 or write to Whirlow Hall Farm Trust, Whirlow Lane, Sheffield S11 9QF

**Contact:** Anna Cowling, Whirlow Lane, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S11 9QF Tel: 0114 236 0096  
Fax: 0114 262 1015 Website: [www.whirlowhallfarm.co.uk](http://www.whirlowhallfarm.co.uk)  
Email: [educationenquiries@whirlowhallfarm.co.uk](mailto:educationenquiries@whirlowhallfarm.co.uk)