

## 13.0 Visits Abroad

There are several issues to consider aside those discussed in other sections of this guidance when organising an Educational Visit or activity abroad. Please note the guidance below is not exhaustive.

### 13.1 USING A TOUR OPERATOR

Before using a tour operator/travel agent Group Leaders should:-

- Ensure the tour operator/travel agent is reputable, see guidance in Section 11.
- Ensure the tour operator/travel agent holds an Air Travel Organisers Licence (ATOL) or is acting as an agent for an ATOL holder, and that the whole package being supplied is covered by the ATOL. The licence is a legal requirement and provides security against the licence holder going out of business.

### 13.2 PREPARING PUPILS FOR VISITS ABROAD

The following factors should be considered when preparing pupils/young people and other Group members for visits abroad: -

- Local language knowledge, particularly common phrases.
- Local culture of the area or country to be visited e.g. impact of particular body language, rules, regulations of behaviour, dress codes, local customs, attitudes to gender etc.
- Use of drugs or alcohol.
- Food & Drink e.g. Group Members should be warned of the dangers of drinking tap water, or ice made produced it, in certain countries. Care may need to be taken with the preparation and consumption of raw vegetables, salads and unpeeled fruit, raw shell fish and under-cooked meats or fish.
- Personal security – Group Members should be informed of how to carry money and valuables e.g. use of money belts, zip armllets. Advice should be given regarding the use of travellers cheques and problems associated with them e.g. they not always accepted and fees may be charged to cash them.
- Communication – Group Members should be informed of how to use phones when abroad including any area codes, money, phone cards/tokens etc. required, restrictions of the mobile phone network and the use of a BT connect Card to allow calls to be charged to the home number.
- Emergencies – Group Members should know what to do in the case of an emergency.

### 13.3 VACCINATIONS

The Group Leader should find out whether any vaccination is necessary and ensure that all Group Members have or will receive vaccinations in good time. Proof of vaccination may be required by some countries. The Department of Health gives advice on vaccination requirements in their publication 'Health Advice To Travellers Anywhere in the World' 1998 T8, which is available free from most Post Offices, travel agents and local libraries.

## 13.4 LANGUAGE ABILITIES

One of the adults within the visiting group should be able to speak and read the language of the destination country and if possible any countries travelled through on the journey. If not, it is strongly recommended that the Group Leader or Supervisor learns enough of the language to hold a basic conversation and knows what to say in the case of an emergency. It is also advisable that the pupils/young group members have a basic knowledge of the language before the visit. Cue cards could be produced in advance to be used in emergencies.

## 13.5 VISAS/PASSPORTS

The Group Leader or Educational Visits Co-ordinator should personally check that all the Group Members and Supervisors have valid passports that are within an acceptable expiry date and visas where appropriate, in the early stages of planning the visit. Some countries have an immigration requirement for a passport to remain valid for a minimum period beyond the date of entry to the country. For example they may not accept a passport as being valid if it is due to expire within 2 months of entry. This is a requirement of the country concerned, not the Passport Office. Any questions should be addressed to their Consulate or Embassy. Your travel agent will also be able to give you advice on this matter. A group passport may suffice in certain circumstances.

Although the United Kingdom is part of the European Union, there is still a requirement to carry a full 10 year British passport every time you travel to a European destination. This includes day trips and travel by Eurostar. Many countries have now abandoned routine passport checks at their land borders but they still expect visitors to be able to produce a valid form of identification. In the case of UK travellers this is the British passport. Remember, your passport will be checked at immigration control on your return to the UK.

**A Collective Passport** is issued in lieu of individual standard passports to approved parties of students, scouts, guides and other recognised youth organisations, under 18 years of age, who are British Nationals and travelling abroad as a group. They must be accompanied by an adult leader (over 21 years of age), and if possible a deputy leader, each holding an individual British passport. A minimum of 5 and a maximum of 50 persons may be included. Cost £39. You should telephone one of the following numbers 0151 471 2726/28/29/30 and you will be transferred to a member of staff who can advise you fully on Collective Passport procedure, who will send you the application form and any other necessary documentation. A Collective Passport can only be used for one trip, inclusive of the arranged set-off and return dates; these dates should be included on the passport application.

## 13.6 NATIONALITY

If the Group includes a pupil whose national or immigration status or entitlement is in doubt, it is advisable to make early enquiries of the Home Office's Immigration and Nationality Directorate. Pupils other than EU nationals may require a separate passport and may need to use separate passport control channels to the rest of the group.

## 13.7 CARE ORDERS AND WARDS OF COURT

If a child is subject to a care order, foster carers will need to ensure that the Supported Living Portfolio consents to any proposed visit abroad. If a pupil is a ward of court, the Head Teacher should seek advice from the court in relation to Educational Visits and activities abroad, well in advance and on an individual basis.

### **13.8 EMERGENCY MEDICAL FACILITIES**

The Group Leader must ensure that all members of the group know what action to take if there is a problem, see Emergency Procedures guidance in Section 15. Some emergency medical facilities are available through reciprocal healthcare arrangements in European Community (EC) Countries to EU Nationals. Form E111 from the DSS is the certificate of entitlement to free or reduced cost treatment and must be completed by each adult Group Member or by each child Group Member's parent. The form is available from Post Offices or Freephone 0800 555777. An information leaflet on the E111 system (Health Advice For Travellers - T5) is available from the Post Office. For non-EU countries, Group Members will be required to show their NHS medical card.

### **13.9 TRAVEL BY AIR**

Taking a school group on an aircraft requires careful planning and preparation. The airline/travel agent may be able to advise on particular requirements. If the group includes any members with disabilities, it is advisable to check with the airline what arrangements it has; such as wheelchair or lifting provision. The Group Leader should resist any attempt by the airline to split up the group between different aircraft. Please note some airlines may charge for the provision of wheelchairs or oxygen.

### **13.10 TRAVEL BY MINIBUS**

The regulations that govern journeys outside the U.K. depend upon the country or countries being visited including those which are passed through. Extra care must be taken when driving in countries that drive on the right; as passenger doors on U.K. minibuses will not open on the kerb side. Drivers taking groups abroad should be familiar with driving a minibus in the country being visited and those countries en-route including the relevant domestic driving laws.

The Driver/operator should consult the vehicles insurers regarding additional insurance cover for the journey and the countries to be visited. Regulations regarding the carrying of certain emergency equipment; e.g. 'a warning triangle' also vary. The Driver should consult one of the main UK motoring organisations for particular advice. Preferential consideration should be given to those drivers who have had previous experience of driving abroad.

#### **Driving Abroad - Drivers Must :-**

- 1 Contact insurer for permission and obtain a green card if necessary.
2. Carry a letter of permission from the registered keeper of the vehicle, e.g. Liverpool City Council Fleet Manager or Contract hire supplier etc (whoever owns it).
3. Ensure there is adequate breakdown / puncture cover for the continent and carry contact details.
4. Identify what other documents or equipment (red triangle, etc) are required for each country they visit.

## **Documentation for International Journeys**

Operators of minibuses and drivers must ensure all documentation for journeys abroad is carried. The requirements may vary according to the country or countries being visited so further advice should be obtained. Some or all of the documents listed below may be required: -

- 1/ Full driving licence with the appropriate entitlement.
- 2/ International Driving Permit or translation of drivers licence (for some countries).
- 3/ If any payment is made by or on behalf of the passengers – a full PSV driving licence.
- 4/ Vehicle Registration Document.
- 5/ Tachograph charts.
- 6/ Letter of authority to drive the minibus.
- 7/ a) Waybill and/or b) Own Account Certificate.
- 8/ Green Card (International Motor Insurance Certificate).

### **1/ Driving licence Requirements**

Driving licence requirements and laws relating to drivers hours vary in countries outside of the EU. Drivers cannot drive a minibus abroad using a private car driving licence regardless of the date the licence was issued; a Passenger Service Vehicle Licence is required. The services of a professional driver should be sought when using a minibus abroad.

### **2/ International Drivers Permit**

An International Drivers Permit (IDP) is an internationally recognised, low cost, document which, when accompanied by your own UK licence will allow you to drive a private motor vehicle in a foreign country. An IDP is proof that you hold a valid driving licence in your own country. It is not always necessary to have one, since many countries recognise each other's licenses, but possessing an IDP has many advantages.

It is intended to overcome the difficulties drivers may have while travelling in other countries that may have widely varying license requirements. It is printed in 10 languages - the five United Nations official languages (English, French, Spanish, Russian and Chinese) plus German Arabic, Italian, the Scandinavian languages and Portuguese. It may also be a useful form of picture ID in the case of a lost or stolen passport.

### **3/ Minibus Permits**

Minibus Permits are not valid abroad.

### **4/ Vehicle registration document**

The vehicle registration document must be carried with you while you are abroad. Photocopies are not acceptable. If your minibus is hired, then the AA or RAC can issue you with a 'Vehicle on Hire' certificate.

### **5/ Tachograph**

A tachograph must be fitted and used for international journeys (except in Eire). Drivers must be trained in the use of the tachograph as misuse may lead to prosecution or spot fines. Driver's hours regulations must be followed from the start of the journey in the UK.

## **6/ Letter of authority**

If your name is not on the vehicle registration document, then you will need a letter from the owner of the vehicle authorising you to drive it abroad. For example, for a school with a minibus registered in the name of Liverpool County Council, a letter on school headed paper, signed by the Headteacher, should be sufficient.

## **7a/ Waybill**

The Waybill provides details of the vehicle, driver, routes, times and a list of passengers, for trips lasting less than 90 days. This covers journeys through all EU Member Countries. Requirements for a journey through any other country should be checked with that country's embassy. Addresses of embassies can be obtained from one of the national motoring organisations.

The top copy of the Waybill must be carried by the driver at all times, and should be stamped at the frontier crossings. The group organiser keeps the duplicate. In addition to the Waybill, a set of translations must also be carried called a 'Model Control Document'. Both of these are available from the Confederation of Public Transport UK.

## **7b/ Own Account Certificate**

The main paperwork needed for an international journey by a voluntary group is an Own Account Certificate. This is available for journeys within the European Union (EU) by a non-profit making body which: -

- Does not have transport as its main activity
- Is transporting its own members in a vehicle which it owns.

Own Account Certificates are valid for five years and are issued free of charge from the International Road Freight Office. If any of the above conditions are not met (e.g. the vehicle is borrowed or hired, or the journey is outside of the EU) then a Waybill will be required.

## **8/ Green Card (International Motor Insurance Certificate).**

Although vehicle insurance policies issued in the UK and Ireland automatically provide the minimum legal cover required within the EU and some other non EU European countries, it is recommended that an International Motor Insurance Certificate (commonly known as a Green Card) is obtained from the minibus operator's insurance company. It is advisable to have at least two drivers named on the Green Card in case of illness to the main driver.

If a trip is being planned to, or through Spain, a Bail Bond is also recommended and this can be obtained from the minibus operator's insurance company. In Spain, the guilty party in an accident can be imprisoned unless there is a deposit paid to cover liability or a fine. A Bail Bond will ensure that a driver is released pending a court case.