INTRODUCTION AND LEGISLATION

Lews Castle College recognises its responsibility and duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) to ensure the safety and welfare of its employees, students and others who may be affected by the Colleges business activities.

This extends to ensuring that all reasonable steps are taken to ensure that all those involved in excursions, fieldwork and residential study trips do so in a safe manner.

Additionally, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 require employers to assess the risks of activities.

This Code of Practice is designed to ensure that a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks is carried out so that all those involved can have a safe and enjoyable experience. It cannot however cover every eventuality and Trip Leaders personal and local judgement must be taken into consideration at all times.

DEFINITIONS

Excursion is any off-campus activity, carried out by students or staff for the purposes of teaching and/or research. This can range from visits to places within the local area such as shops, places of entertainment or worship or historical sites. It also includes taking part in adventure activities, overnight stays or travelling abroad.

Due to their varied and diverse nature these activities have been divided into 5 categories to assist with the risk assessment process.

**Category 1**
An excursion involving hazardous activities such as white water rafting, kayaking, rock climbing, abseiling, off-road cycling etc.

**Category 2**
Excursion to a foreign country

**Category 3**
Overnight stays

**Category 4**
Day long trips

**Category 5**
Local short duration
RESPONSIBILITIES

The Lews Castle College Risk Assessment Policy will apply to all excursions, fieldwork and residential study trips. It is the responsibility of the respective Head of Department to ensure that all risk assessments are in place prior to excursions taking place.

The Head of Department will have overall responsibility to ensure that a Trip Leader is appointed. In conjunction with the Head of Department the Trip Leader must make a suitable and sufficient assessment of all risks to the health and safety of the students and staff members involved in the proposed excursion. This will include practical guidance, assistance and training. Further advice can be requested from the Health and Safety Adviser.

The Head of Department will not approve excursions/residential trips until they are satisfied that all documentation has been satisfactorily completed and suitable and sufficient risk assessments are in place. Thereafter, the respective Assistant Principal must give permission before any excursions take place.

The Trip Leader shall in the first instance, ensure that the activity is suited to the students’ needs and abilities. This will include ensuring that the excursion provides the continuous development of all students by developing team building skills, encouraging greater independence and preparing students for the external workplace. It will then be the Trip Leaders responsibility to ensure that staff and students are fully briefed and are conversant in all appropriate aspects of the excursion.

The Trip Leader must be competent to manage and monitor the risks throughout the excursion.

The planning and preparation sequence by the Trip Leader will include the following:

1. Ensure that risk assessments are prepared and that they are suitable and sufficient for all foreseeable risks and that the contents of the risk assessment are communicated to all those involved.

2. Ensure all associated documentation is completed and verified.

3. Ensure that written permission for the trip has been granted by the Head of Department and is appropriately recorded.

4. Be the point of contact in an emergency situation.

5. Inform all trip participants of appropriate conduct and all specific requirements for the trip.
DOCUMENTATION

All College excursions and residential trips will be administered in accordance with the category system. Each category requires a different timescale, level of care, documentation, authorisation, arrangements and resources depending on the category.

INSURANCE

Lews Castle College will arrange travel insurance with the College’s insurers, RSA March when all relevant documentation has been completed. It is important that the Finance Office at LCC are given the required advance timescale to enable them to arrange appropriate travel insurance.

PLANNING

Whether the excursion is to a local venue, or includes a residential stay in the UK or abroad, it is essential that formal planning takes place and begins sufficiently in advance of departure. This involves considering the dangers and difficulties which may arise and making plans to reduce them. The formal planning period depending on the Category of the excursion must be completed within the following timescales:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Category 1</td>
<td>2 months in advance of commencement date of excursion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 2</td>
<td>2 months in advance of commencement date of excursion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 3</td>
<td>1 month in advance of commencement date of stay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 4</td>
<td>2 weeks in advance of commencement date of trip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category 5</td>
<td>1 week in advance of commencement date of short trip</td>
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</tbody>
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EXPLORATORY VISIT

Wherever possible, the Trip Leader should undertake an exploratory visit to gain the following information:

1. To ensure at first hand that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the excursion.
2. To assess potential areas and levels of risk.
3. To ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and participants in the group.
4. Become familiar with the area before taking a group there.

If the excursion is to a residential centre, group leaders may consider:

1. Obtain advice from other groups who have used the venue.
2. Obtain advice from the manager of the residential establishment.
3. Consult the organisation operating procedures, risk assessment documentation, health and safety policy and insurance cover.

If it is not practically possible to conduct an exploratory visit the Trip Leader will need to consider how to conduct an adequate risk assessment.

A minimum measure would be to obtain specific information from the venue and other organisation who may have used the venue recently.
**CATEGORY 1 – Excursions Involving Hazardous Activities**

It is College Policy that only AALA (Adventure Activity Licensing Authority) licensed companies are contracted for adventure activities.

The following documentation is required for all Category 1 excursions:

1. **Risk Assessment**
   The following factors must be considered within the risk assessment process:

   (a) Nature of the activity – (supervised/unsupervised)
   (b) Transport considerations
   (c) Travel by ferry
   (d) Travel in remote locations
   (e) Suitability of equipment
   (f) Qualifications and experience of College and external staff
   (g) Staff and student gender mix
   (h) Age, maturity and ability of students
   (i) Size of group including staff/student ratio
   (j) First Aid
   (k) Accommodation (if overnight stay)
   (l) Fire precautions
   (m) Responsibilities during free time
   (n) Alternative plan
   (o) Communication and contact arrangements
   (p) Weather conditions
   (q) Cultural considerations

2. Risk assessments to be provided by outside providers.

3. All relevant documentation to be provided by external AALA (Adventure Activity Licensing Authority) licenced providers.

4. Parental consent if a student is under 16 years of age.

5. Relevant medical information for group members.

6. Emergency contact details to be held by the Trip Leader and Head of Department.

7. Written authorisation of the Head of Department.
CATEGORY 2 – Excursions to a Foreign Country

The following documentation is required for all Category 2 excursions.

1. **Risk Assessment**
   The following factors to be considered within the risk assessment process:
   (a) Nature of the activity (supervised/unsupervised)
   (b) Transport considerations (passports/visas)
   (c) Travel by ferry
   (d) Travel in remote locations
   (e) Suitability of equipment
   (f) Qualifications and experience of College and external staff
   (g) Staff and student gender mix
   (h) Age, maturity and ability of students
   (i) Size of group including staff/student ratio
   (j) First Aid
   (k) Accommodation suitability
   (l) Fire precautions
   (m) Responsibilities during free time
   (n) Alternative plan
   (o) Communication and contact arrangements
   (p) Weather conditions
   (q) Inoculations
   (r) Cultural considerations

2. Risk assessments to be provided by outside providers.

3. All other relevant documentation by outside providers.

4. Parental consent if student is under 16 years of age.

5. Relevant medical information for group members.

6. Emergency contact details to be held by the Trip Leader and Head of Department.

7. Written authorisation of Head of Department.
CATEGORY 3 – Overnight Stays

The following documentation is required for all Category 3 excursions.

1. **Risk Assessment**
   The following factors to be considered within the risk assessment process:
   
   (a) Nature of the activity (supervised/unsupervised)
   (b) Accommodation
   (c) Transport considerations
   (d) Travel by ferry
   (e) Travel in remote locations
   (f) Qualifications and experience of College and external staff
   (g) Staff and student gender mix
   (h) Age, maturity and ability of students
   (i) Size of group including staff/student ratio
   (j) First Aid
   (k) Fire precautions
   (l) Responsibilities during free time
   (m) Alternative plan
   (n) Communication and contact arrangements
   (o) Weather conditions
   (p) Cultural considerations

2. Risk assessments to be provided by outside providers.

3. All other relevant documentation by outside providers

4. Parental consent if student is under 16 year of age or a protected adult.

5. Relevant medical information for group members.

6. Emergency contact details to be held by the Trip Leader and Head of Department.

7. Written authorisation of the Head of Department.
CATEGORY 4 – Day Long Trips

The following documentation is required for all Category 4 excursions.

1. **Risk Assessment**
   The following factors to be considered within the risk assessment process:
   
   (a) Nature of the activity (supervised/unsupervised)
   (b) Transport considerations
   (c) Travel by ferry
   (d) Travel in remote locations
   (e) Suitability of equipment
   (f) Qualifications and experience of College and external staff
   (g) Age, maturity and ability of students
   (h) Size of group including staff/student ratios
   (i) First Aid
   (j) Communication and contact arrangements
   (k) Responsibilities during free time
   (l) Weather conditions
   (m) Cultural considerations

2. Parental consent if student is under 16 years of age or a protected adult.

3. Relevant medical information for group members.

4. Emergency contact details to be held by Trip Leader and Head of Department.

5. Written authorisation of Head of Department.
CATEGORY 5 – Local Short Duration Trips

The following documentation is required for all Category 5 excursions.

1. **Risk Assessment**
   The following factors to be considered within the risk assessment process:

   (a) Nature of activity (supervised/unsupervised)
   (b) Transport considerations
   (c) Travel by ferry
   (d) Travel in remote locations
   (e) Age, maturity and ability of students
   (f) Size of group including staff/student ratio
   (g) First Aid
   (h) Communication and contact arrangements
   (i) Responsibilities during free time
   (j) Weather conditions
   (k) Cultural considerations

2. Parental consent if student is under 16 years of age or a protected adult.

3. Relevant medical information for group members.

4. Emergency contact details to be held by the Trip Leader and Head of Department.

5. Written authorisation of Head of Department.
FREQUENT EXCURSIONS

Frequent excursions to local venues such as swimming pools and local places of interest may not need a new risk assessment to be produced for each excursion. Nevertheless, it is essential not to become complacent. A general assessment of the risks of such excursions should be made at regular intervals and careful monitoring should take place.

OTHER PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Other factors which should be included in planning stage are:

1. The facilities/equipment the group will need to take on the excursion.
2. The facilities/equipment to be provided at the venue – ensure that it is safe to use and fit for purpose.
3. Insurance arrangements at the venue – provider of Public Liability Insurance and Policy number.
4. Staff training needs.
5. The designation of someone to record the details of the excursion and to carry documentation such as accident report forms etc.
6. Transport arrangements.
7. Insurance arrangements.
8. Information to venue and activity providers.
10. Contingency measures for enforced change of plan or late return.
11. Information to parents or carers of protected adults.
12. Preparing participants.
14. Arrangements for sending participants home early in emergency situations.
15. Local emergency arrangements at venues such as fire evacuation procedures.

FINANCIAL PLANNING

The Trip Leader must ensure that early written information about the cost of the excursion is available to all concerned. Prior agreement must be made to ensure that all excursion costs are met in full including travel, accommodation and meals in good time.
INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS

The Trip Leader must decide how best to distribute information about the proposed excursion, however it must be comprehensive and done in good time to allow participants the best opportunity to properly prepare themselves.

All participants must understand:

1. The aims and objectives of the excursion/activity.
2. The background information about the place to be visited.
3. Relevant culture and customs – particularly during visits abroad.
4. How to avoid specific dangers and why they must follow rules.
5. Why safety precautions are in place.
6. Why special safety precautions are in place for anyone with disabilities.
7. Why standards of behaviour are expected from participants.
8. The need for appropriate personal and social conduct.
9. The person responsible and in overall control of the group.

VETTING SUITABILITY

All staff members and volunteers assisting with excursions must comply with the Colleges’ vetting arrangements and Policies.

HEAD COUNTS

Whatever the length and nature of the excursion, regular head counting of participants must take place, particularly when there are opportunities for participants to become separated.

The Trip Leader and staff supervisor’s should carry a list of all participants and staff involved in the excursion.

It is particularly important to conduct head counts when children or adults with additional support needs are participating in an excursion.

PREPARING PARTICIPANTS

Part of the risk assessment process will involve preparing the participants for the excursion. They must be made aware of any potential dangers and the need to ensure their own safety and that of others.

Additionally, they must understand the standard of conduct and behaviour expected of them as representatives of Lews Castle College and all rules that need to be followed.

Participants should also be involved in planning, implementing and evaluating their own contribution to the excursion and fully take into consideration any health and safety issues.
RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRIP LEADER

The Trip Leader will have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the excursion and must have due regard for the health and safety of the group.

The Trip Leader should have been appointed and approved by the respective Assistant Principal and must meet the following criteria:

1. Obtain the respective Assistant Principals prior permission before off site excursion takes place.
2. Follow all Lews Castle College regulations, policies and guidelines.
3. Appoint a Deputy where appropriate (the Deputy must also be deemed to be a competent person).
4. Clearly define each group supervisors’ role and ensure all tasks have been assigned.
5. Be able to control and lead participants of the relevant age group and give considerations to issues such as immaturity and lack of experience.
6. Be suitably competent to instruct participants in the activity and be familiar with the location/centre where the activity will take place.
7. Be trained in child protection issues and the specific protection issues of protected adults. (if any of the participants are protected adults or children under the age of 16 years)
8. Ensure that adequate first aid provision will be available.
9. Undertake and complete the planning and preparation of the excursion including the briefing of group members and parents.
10. Ensure a comprehensive risk assessment is in place.
11. Review regularly undertaken excursions/activities and advise the Head of Departments where adjustments may be necessary.
12. Ensure that all staff supervisors are fully aware of what the proposed excursion involves.
13. Have enough information on the participants proposed for the excursion to assess their suitability or be satisfied that their suitability has been previously assessed and confirmed.
14. Ensure that the ratio of supervisors to participants is appropriate for the needs of the group.
15. Consider stopping the excursion if the risk to health and safety of the participants is unacceptable and have alternative procedures in place for such an eventuality.

16. Ensure that group supervisors have home contact details for all participants.

17. Ensure that group supervisors and the Lews Castle College Reception have a copy of emergency procedures and know how to activate them.

18. Ensure that group supervisors have details of participant's additional support or medical needs which will be necessary for them to carry out their tasks effectively.

19. Observe the guidance set out for supervisors and other adults.
First Aid Arrangements

Where the risk assessment process identifies the need for qualified first aiders to be available on an excursion these first aiders must be in possession of a current HSE approved certificate which could be either First Aid at Work or Emergency First Aid at Work. First aiders must be identified during the excursion planning stage and should be listed on both the LCC Excursions Travel Arrangements Form and the LCC Excursions Emergency Contact List as the designated first aiders.

Travel First Aid Kits are available to be signed out at:

- Reception, Lews Castle College, Stornoway.
- Reception, Lews Castle College, Benbecula.
- Reception, Lews Castle College, Barra.
- Lews Castle College, Taigh Cearsabhaigh.

These first aid kits must be returned immediately following the excursion and arrangements made to replenish any used items. Accident Reports Forms or Near Miss Report Forms must be submitted in accordance with the LCC Accident and Incident Reporting Policy.

Guidance for the completion of excursion forms

All relevant forms must be issued and processed in good time to allow for proper planning of the excursion and submitted in the following sequence:

1. LCC Excursion Medical and Consent Form (Students) or; LCC Excursion Medical and Consent Form (Protected Adults and Children) or LCC Excursion Medical and Consent Form (Volunteers and Staff).

2. When all completed forms have been received and the final numbers have been agreed, complete the LCC Excursion Approval Form and submit to the Head of Department who will request the approval of the respective Assistant Principal.

3. When the approval of the Assistant Principal has been received submit the LCC Travel Request Form. At this stage please inform Finance and the LCC Health and Safety Advisor to enable insurance arrangements and any additional cover required to be put in place.

4. Complete the LCC Excursion Travel Arrangements Form. The Trip Leader and accompanying staff members should retain a copy of this form.

5. Complete the LCC Excursions Emergency Contact/Medication list. The Trip Leader and accompanying staff members should retain a copy of this Form. Immediately prior to departure when accurate participant numbers have been confirmed please forward a copy of the completed form to Reception at Lews Castle College, Stornoway.

The copy of the form sent to Reception at LCC Stornoway must not list the medication details of participants.

NOTE: All information provided on forms will remain confidential and will be subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act.