

LEA provision of specialist advice to schools on aspects of health and safety in physical education and school sport

March 2007



Rhagoriaeth i bawb....Excellence for all

Arolygiaeth Ei Mawrhydi dros Addysg
a Hyfforddiant yng Nghymru

Her Majesty's Inspectorate
for Education and Training in Wales



BUDDSODDWR MEWN POBL.
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

The purpose of Estyn is to inspect quality and standards in education and training in Wales. Estyn is responsible for inspecting:

- ▲ nursery schools and settings that are maintained by, or receive funding from, local education authorities (LEAs);
- ▲ primary schools;
- ▲ secondary schools;
- ▲ special schools;
- ▲ pupil referral units;
- ▲ independent schools;
- ▲ further education;
- ▲ adult community-based learning;
- ▲ youth support services;
- ▲ LEAs;
- ▲ teacher education and training;
- ▲ work-based learning;
- ▲ careers companies; and
- ▲ the education, guidance and training elements of Jobcentre plus.

Estyn also:

- ▲ provides advice on quality and standards in education and training in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales and others; and
- ▲ makes public good practice based on inspection evidence.

Every possible care has been taken to ensure that the information in this document is accurate at the time of going to press. Any enquiries or comments regarding this document/publication should be addressed to:

Publication Section

Estyn

Anchor Court

Keen Road

Cardiff

CF24 5JW or by email to publications@estyn.gsi.gov.uk

This and other Estyn publications are available on our website: www.estyn.gov.uk

© Crown Copyright 2007: This report may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that it is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Crown copyright and the title of the document/publication specified.

Contents	Page
Introduction	1
Background	2
Main findings	4
Recommendations	5
Developments since 2005	6
National Curriculum physical education activities	7
The National Curriculum for physical education in Wales	8
Risk assessment in physical education	8
Outdoor education	10
Water activities – including those close to water and activities on open or hazardous terrain	10
Overseas visits	10
Dissemination of good practice by local education authorities	11
Conclusion	12
Appendix: Examples of good practice	
Case study 1	
Case study 2	
Case study 3	

Introduction

- 1 The purpose of this report is to respond to the request from the Welsh Assembly Government in the Minister's annual remit to Estyn, to evaluate how health and safety is managed in physical education (PE) and school sport, including outdoor activities. The report considers the role of local education authorities (LEAs) in providing advice and guidance to schools on health and safety issues in the following four areas:
 - National Curriculum physical education (PE) activities;
 - water activities, including those close to water;
 - activities on open or hazardous terrain; and
 - overseas visits.
- 2 The report also includes an appendix with case studies of good practice.
- 3 In carrying out this survey, inspectors considered evidence from:
 - sixteen of the 22 LEAs in Wales;
 - PE advisers in Wales, on risk assessment documents and procedures in schools; and
 - the Outdoor Education Advisers Panel Wales.
- 4 Estyn's last report on this issue, 'The management of safety in physical education and outdoor activities and centres in Wales 2004-2005' is available on Estyn's website www.estyn.gov.uk. The report highlighted the need for LEAs to provide advice to schools on health and safety in the four areas noted above and to offer better responses to related enquiries from schools.

Background

- 5 All physical activities carry some risk of injury. However, if these risks are minimised, the benefits that pupils gain from taking part in physical education and outdoor activities outweigh the risks. These physical activities help pupils to:
- keep fit and healthy and develop a commitment to a healthy lifestyle;
 - develop lifelong interests;
 - improve their confidence and self-esteem;
 - respect themselves and others;
 - develop an understanding of their strengths and limitations;
 - appreciate the strengths and limitations of others;
 - work together sensitively; and
 - adopt and develop their expertise in fulfilling various roles.
- 6 Pupils also learn to respect the environment, have due regard for safety and take responsibility for themselves and others.
- 7 The Estyn report on 'The management of safety in physical education and outdoor activities in schools and centres in Wales 2004-2005' made a number of recommendations to the Welsh Assembly Government, LEAs and schools. The recommendations about physical education were mainly addressed to LEAs and schools and focused on:
- making sure that schools have a copy of the most up-to-date Safe Practice in Physical Education publication issued by the British Association of Advisers and Lecturers in PE (Baalpe)¹;
 - providing access for all LEAs and schools to specialist PE advice and support;
 - providing training in risk assessment for all curricular and extra-curricular physical education activities;
 - assessing physical education activities and off-site visits before and during the activity; and
 - making sure that all staff are competent and have access to regular training on health and safety and risk management.

¹ Baalpe joined with the PE Association to form the Association for PE (afPE) in 2006. The afPE will take responsibility for all future updates and publication of the Safe Practice document.

8 Specific recommendations for LEAs focused on:

- having a physical education and an outdoor activities point-of-contact for schools; and
- providing advice, support and training for teachers about risk management so that all schools are aware of nationally recognised health and safety guidance for:
 - National Curriculum PE activities;
 - water activities, including those close to water;
 - activities on open or hazardous terrain; and
 - overseas visits.

9 Specific recommendations were addressed to the Welsh Assembly Government about the management of outdoor activities. These included activities that take place both on-site and off-site, during school-time and in extra-curricular time. These recommendations focused on:

- updating and issuing the three supplementary Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (HASPEV) guidance documents;
- providing best practice advice on the safety management of school extra-curricular activities and overseas visits that may be potentially hazardous; and
- recommending all schools have a trained educational-visits co-ordinator.

Main findings

- 10 Since 2005, there have been a number of positive developments and improvements in how health and safety is managed in physical education, most notably in the area of outdoor activities.
- 11 Most LEAs in Wales have implemented the recommendations made in Estyn's report 'The management of safety in physical education and outdoor activities in schools and centres in Wales 2004-2005'. However, five LEAs still do not have a specialist outdoor activities 'point-of-contact' for schools. In addition, seven LEAs have no specialist physical education adviser or identified specialist point-of-contact for schools for health and safety issues in physical education.
- 12 Most LEAs recommend that schools buy a copy of the Safe Practice in Physical Education publication issued by the British Association of Advisers and Lecturers in PE (Baalpe). However, in LEAs that do not pay for this purchase, small schools often decide that they will rely on older versions of the guidance. This is unwise, and leaves schools, the authority and the Director of Education vulnerable should an accident result in litigation.
- 13 Sixteen of the 22 LEAs in Wales have provided information for this report. They all recommend that schools undertake and document risk assessments for all National Curriculum physical education and extra-curricular activities. All LEAs direct schools to HASPEV² for most outdoor activities and to associated documents, such as 'Safety at Water Margins', for water activities.
- 14 All LEAs have their own requirements and guidance for groups travelling abroad. Most issue schools with the existing guidance, shortly to be updated, from the Welsh Assembly Government.
- 15 About half of LEAs have offered in-service training to teachers leading educational visits. All have put this training on hold until the Welsh Assembly Government issues its new guidance. The LEAs all plan to offer revised training for educational visits co-ordinators during 2007, following the launch of new guidelines.
- 16 All LEAs expect schools to report any incidents, including 'near misses', as soon as possible after the event. To do this, schools have appropriate procedures that include telephone calls, emails and meetings, as well as formal incident and accident reporting procedures.

² HASPEV – Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits

Recommendations

All local education authorities should:

- R1 provide schools with the support of a physical education or an outdoor education adviser at the earliest opportunity;
- R2 advise all schools strongly to purchase the most recent version of the Safe Practice in Physical Education guidance and seriously consider covering the cost;
- R3 quality-assure all plans for overseas visits rigorously;
- R4 issue the latest health and safety information to all their schools and promote good practice; and
- R5 offer training to all teachers leading educational visits following the launch of the new Welsh Assembly Government guidelines in 2007.

Developments since 2005

- 17 Since the publication of Estyn's report 'The management of safety in physical education and outdoor activities and centres in Wales 2004-2005' in 2005, there have been a number of positive improvements in how health and safety is managed in physical education, most notably in the area of outdoor activities.
- 18 The Welsh Assembly Government has completed its update of the three supplementary Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits guidance documents. These documents are scheduled for publication and issue to schools in 2007. This guidance will carry an endorsement from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and will recommend that all schools have a trained educational visits co-ordinator.
- 19 The Association of Directors of Education Wales (ADEW) has sought advice from the Outdoor Education Advisers Panel Wales (OEAPW). As a result of the comprehensive guidance offered, ADEW agreed that every LEA will have access to a team of outdoor education advisers. These appointments will be arranged in collaboration with neighbouring LEAs. LEAs without an adviser for physical education should consider establishing similar partnership arrangements to make sure they provide specialist advice and support for PE.
- 20 ADEW has also decided to remind schools about the safety management of off-site visits, before new guidance from the Welsh Assembly Government and HSE has been issued. A number of LEAs sent a standard letter, provided by OEAPW, to all schools. This has given much-needed consistency of advice in all LEAs in Wales.

National Curriculum physical education activities

- 21 There are six full-time, specialist physical education advisers across Wales. These advisers are very experienced and, through effective partnership arrangements between LEAs, they provide expert advice and support to schools in 13 of the 22 LEAs in Wales.
- 22 One large LEA is without a specialist adviser, but has a part-time advisory teacher for physical education. This LEA has a very good partnership arrangement with a neighbouring LEA to provide advice, where required, and joint training. Another LEA has retained an expert consultant to give advice and support whenever required.
- 23 Seven LEAs in Wales have still not identified a specialist to provide schools with advice and support for physical education. A couple of these LEAs consider that an advisory teacher is an appropriate person to offer advice and support. However, the role of an advisory teacher is significantly different from that of an adviser. Many advisory teachers are not experienced enough or do not have the necessary specialist knowledge to provide the full range of support for primary and secondary schools that an adviser can give. Most advisory teachers have a specific role to offer training for non-specialist teachers in primary schools and facilitate training for specialist PE teachers in secondary schools. Some are employed for as little as one hour per week or one day per half-term. In circumstances where advisory teachers lack the full range of experience and specialist knowledge, the LEA is ill-advised to identify them as the most appropriate people to offer specialist advice and support.
- 24 Four of the six specialist physical education advisers that between them support 13 LEAs have wider responsibilities than for physical education alone. For example, one adviser is only able to allocate 5% of his time to physical education across two counties with more than 200 schools. Despite this, he provides very good, regular advice and support, and keeps health and safety issues high on the list of LEA priorities. The other three specialist physical education advisers are similarly constrained by general responsibilities for school improvement.
- 25 Every LEA that provided information for this survey confirmed that it advises schools to follow the guidelines set out by Baalpe. A few have additional health and safety documents. These are all based on the Baalpe guidance. In Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Conwy, Denbighshire, Newport and Pembrokeshire the LEAs purchased and paid for a copy of the 2004 edition of the Baalpe safe practice guidance for every one of their schools. This is exemplary practice. Other LEAs advised their schools to purchase a copy of the guidance at their own expense.

The National Curriculum for physical education in Wales

- 26 The National Curriculum orders for physical education in Wales mention safety in relation to teaching in all key stages. Many of the requirements concern personal safety in the context of a health-related exercise or are about following relevant rules and safety procedures, but others are more general. These include statements that pupils should be taught:
- to lift, carry, place and use apparatus safely (key stage 1, 2 and 3 gymnastics); and
 - the principles and skills of water safety and survival (key stage 2 swimming).
- 27 PE advisers, Physical Education and School Sport (PESS) consultants and PESS co-ordinators confirm that teachers teach pupils how to lift, carry, place and use gymnastics apparatus from an early age. Teachers take a great deal of time over this and make sure that pupils learn how to manage apparatus safely. Teachers also teach pupils to carry and manage games and athletics equipment and make sure they use equipment that is appropriate for the pupils' age and stage of development.

Risk assessment in physical education

- 28 Most LEAs recommend that schools undertake and document risk assessments for all physical education activities. They also recommend that they risk-assess extra-curricular activities as well. In LEAs where there is access to a PE adviser, risk assessment is covered in every PE course, including secondary heads of department meetings, primary curriculum leader meetings and swimming courses, that forms part of the in-service training programme.
- 29 In the best example of LEA management of safety, an authority in south-east Wales makes it clear to all schools that they are expected to draft risk assessments for all physical education activities and also to indicate how they will manage those risks. This authority provided all schools with Baalpe posters on safe practice in PE, outdoor adventurous activities and extra-curricular fixtures. Schools in that LEA have also agreed to finance, from their own budgets, a health and safety support officer to help schools develop risk assessments for all activities that take place on the school site. This is very good practice, and shows a common appreciation by headteachers and the local authority of the importance of safety.
- 30 In two neighbouring LEAs, there is a document on the LEAs' websites (Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits) which is based on the existing Welsh Assembly Government HASPEV document. Schools download risk assessment forms from the LEAs' websites. The forms grade activities according to the possible risk. For the most risky activities, schools have to send the form to the PE adviser who works for both LEAs. He evaluates the activity and gives his endorsement or asks the school for more detail. This is an example of good quality assurance.

- 31 In one authority without a specialist PE adviser, the secondary schools all revised their risk assessments last year with the help of a consultant, who is a former PE adviser and a safety expert for Baalpe (now afPE). In that authority, all primary schools have also undertaken generic risk assessments.
- 32 Almost all schools that teach outdoor education use specialist outdoor education centres. All these centres have their own comprehensive risk assessment documents which schools have to follow without exception when they use the centres. The specialist centres employ expert staff, many of whom are qualified and experienced teachers, as well as experts in a range of outdoor activities. Safety and risk assessments in these settings are invariably of high quality.

Outdoor education

Water activities - including those close to water and activities on open or hazardous terrain

- 33 All LEAs acknowledge that they have a responsibility to provide support and guidance for schools undertaking outdoor education activities. Most LEAs direct schools to HASPEV for most outdoor activities and other associated documents such as 'Safety at Water Margins' which are specific to water activities. These include reference to watersports, coastal visits, swimming in the sea or other natural waters and swimming pools. Some LEAs issue additional guidelines from DfES, the Central Council for Physical Recreation, the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority and the Environment Agency, many of which include guidance for activities taking place on open or hazardous terrain.
- 34 Schools in local authorities with a specialist PE adviser often consult the adviser directly for advice and guidance about PE activities such as swimming. Those with an outdoor education adviser based within the authority consult them for adventurous activities related to water and open or hazardous terrain.

Overseas visits

- 35 All LEAs in Wales have their own requirements and guidance for groups travelling abroad. Most issue schools with existing guidance, shortly to be updated, from the Welsh Assembly Government. This has a specific chapter on 'visits abroad'. LEAs' internal procedures relate to information required for certain types of visits. This information typically includes:
- copies of risk assessments;
 - names and addresses of pupils and staff;
 - the itinerary; and
 - insurance details.
- 36 When visits include outdoor activities of any type, a designated officer gives guidance taken from documents such as HASPEV and other DfES and HSE guidance. Much of this guidance is based on OEAPW advice.
- 37 Authorities in North Wales recommend that all off-site visits are planned with great care. They provide appropriate advice, documentation and simple forms for schools to complete, prior to visits taking place. The authorities fully recognise the value of educational visits and support schools in carrying out these special learning opportunities. However, not all LEAs rigorously quality-assure schools' plans for overseas trips.

- 38 About half of the LEAs that supplied information have offered in-service training to teachers leading educational visits in the past. All have put this on hold whilst waiting for the Welsh Assembly Government to issue the new guidance. The LEAs all intend to offer revised educational visits co-ordinator training during 2007 following the launch of new guidance. The guidance will include a requirement for all educational establishments to appoint an educational visits co-ordinator. All co-ordinators who were trained before 2006 will be retrained. Where the LEA has a designated adviser for outdoor education, this person will lead or be heavily involved in the training. Some LEAs have already planned and included educational visits co-ordinator training in their in-service training programme for 2007-2008.
- 39 One authority in south east Wales offers in-service training on risk assessment generically through the local authority health and safety officer and on PE and outdoor education specifically through the PE adviser. In this authority, the schools have agreed to finance a health and safety support officer to help them develop risk assessments for all activities that take place on the school site.
- 40 All LEAs expect schools to report any incidents, including 'near misses', to them as soon as possible after the event. Schools use standard procedures which include telephone calls, emails and meetings as well as formal incident and accident reporting procedures. All local authorities have corporate health and safety committees or teams, who also receive the reports. These teams monitor incidents and trends and investigate these further, if necessary. In Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion, Gwynedd and Ynys Môn, accident report forms are also sent to the PE adviser as a matter of course.

Dissemination of good practice by local education authorities

- 41 In LEAs that have a PE or an outdoor education adviser, these advisers make sure that schools receive the latest advice and support, and promote and publicise any examples of good practice through emails, circulars, and meetings for head teachers, heads of PE departments and PE co-ordinators. All the advisers are members of the OEAPW and are kept up-to-date with news and information that are useful to schools.
- 42 Only Merthyr Tydfil identified that their designated health and safety officer would automatically inform other schools after an incident about what to do to try to avoid similar accidents happening to them, although several other local authorities may also do so. All local authorities should seriously consider making such arrangements.
- 43 Other bodies that offer good practice guidance include the afPE, the HSE and local authority human resources health and safety officers. Most local authority health and safety officers attend termly meetings of LEA health and safety officers where various issues are discussed. Most LEAs refer to the HSE web site regularly for the latest information. All receive information from Syniad, the Health and Safety Education Forum (Welsh Local Government Association), through their circulars.

Conclusion

- 44 There have been a number of positive developments and improvements since 2005 in the procedures that schools and LEAs follow. Most LEAs recommend, and some insist, that schools undertake and document risk assessments for all National Curriculum physical education activities. All LEAs acknowledge that they have a responsibility to provide support and guidance for schools undertaking outdoor education activities.
- 45 Most LEAs provide sound advice to schools about:
- National Curriculum PE activities;
 - water activities, including those close to water;
 - activities on open or hazardous terrain; and
 - overseas visits.
- 46 However, seven LEAs in Wales still do not have a specialist physical education adviser and five have no outdoor activities point-of-contact for schools nor do they yet have firm arrangements to access such support. This puts them in a vulnerable position if schools need urgent, day-to-day advice and support about safety issues specific to physical education or outdoor activities.

Appendix: Examples of good practice

Case study 1

The online guidance and booking system for schools in north-east Wales

The bilingual guidance has been developed through regional co-operation by local authorities to ensure consistency. Denbighshire is the lead authority and other authorities provide support through a service level agreement.

The computerised booking system provides a record for the authority of all visits run by schools, and allows the authorities to monitor all off-site visits at the press of a button. This will provide an invaluable tool in the event of an emergency, for example, terrorist activity or natural disaster.

It leads teachers or youth workers simply and intuitively through the visit-planning and approval process as set out in the 2007 Welsh Assembly Government guidance on educational visits. It provides a fast and effective visit-notification and approval system without the need for paper form filling. The system is further supported by specific training delivered to the school's educational visits co-ordinator by the local authorities' outdoor education adviser, who is the chair of the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel Wales.

Good features

This is an example of good practice because it:

- establishes clear lines of responsibility for approving and monitoring visits across north-east Wales;
- provides a user-friendly, convenient system for schools; and
- is supported by expert training.

Case study 2

Quality assurance by two LEAs in west Wales

In Ceredigion and Carmarthenshire, a system of quality assurance has been developed to cater for all school, off-site educational visits.

School off-site visits are categorised into:

- **Category A** visits: for example, simple routine trips such as class visits to the local park, shops or sports centre.
- **Category B1** visits: for example, sports trips to other schools, or national centres of interest.
- **Category B2** visits: for example, visits to out-of-county outdoor activity centres, or open countryside where activities involving potential higher risk take place, such as fell walking, climbing or canoeing.
- **Category C** visits: all trips to countries overseas.

For category B2 and C visits there is a requirement to provide information to the LEA so that these visits can be supported. The LEA outdoor education adviser is responsible for overseeing the organisation of such visits and agreeing their content and delivery. There is no requirement for details of the category A or B1 visits to be sent to the LEA.

The two authorities strongly recommend that all off-site visits are planned with great care. They provide appropriate advice, documentation and simple forms for schools to complete, prior to visits taking place. The two authorities fully recognise the value of educational visits and support schools in carrying out these special learning opportunities.

Both authorities regularly offer all their schools a certificated in-service course so that teachers can become qualified educational visit co-ordinators.

Good features

This is an example of good practice because it makes sure that:

- off-site educational visits are planned in a consistent and safe way;
- the LEA monitors the visits that present most risk; and
- school visits are carried out and evaluated professionally.

Case study 3

Risk assessment of PE activities in three schools in south-east Wales

All of the PE departments carried out initial risk assessments several years ago. Over time they have reviewed, amended and expanded their assessments. All now include detailed risk assessment of:

- every area of activity taught in curriculum time;
- every facility used to teach each activity both on-site and off-site;
- all extra-curricular activities;
- travel arrangements for extra-curricular activities; and
- activities that involve overnight or longer stays.

The risk assessments cover the following areas:

- identification of the hazard;
- vulnerable groups (pupils and/or teachers);
- severity of the hazard;
- likelihood of occurrence;
- risk factor;
- if the risk can be controlled; and
- what action must be taken to prevent an accident and by whom.

Risk assessments for overseas sporting or outdoor activities cover the following:

- travel on a bus, including stops at service stations;
- air or ferry crossings;
- accommodation;
- water/field/beach areas;
- visits to the supermarket or local shops;
- visits to specific places whilst abroad; and
- procedures in the event of an accident or injury.

Good features

This is an example of good practice because it makes sure that:

- all teachers are aware of the risks attached to all activities and facilities;
- all teachers are aware of their general and specific responsibilities; and
- all risk assessments are reviewed regularly.