



#### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

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## **1. How do I obtain Local Authority approval for a visit (residential and or adventurous activities) now that GOF1s' are no longer issued?**

Local Authority approval for any visit that is either residential or includes adventurous activities is now obtained online using KCC's e-go notification and approval system for off-site visits. In order to access e-go, users require a username and password. This can be obtained from your establishments Educational Visit Co-ordinator (EVC), Headteacher (H/T) or Area Youth Officer (AYO). Guidance for EVC's, H/T's and AYO's on Creating a New Person and allocating them login details can be found in the Help Centre within e-go.

Once you have logged into e-go you can enter a new visit into the system and carry out a pre-check on any providers of adventurous activities or residential facilities by clicking on the New Visit button on the My-Ego page. Once you have entered some basic details and confirmed that any providers you are using are on the KCC database you are given confirmation to proceed with your arrangements and your online form is generated. Local authority approval is then obtained by completing your online form and obtaining approval from both your EVC, H/T or AYO and KCC's Outdoor Education Unit using the Pass It On functionality built into the system.

You can be sure you have Local Authority approval for your visit once Section 2 of the online form states that the visit has been "Approved by LA" in the status section.

The e-go system and further guidance can be accessed via our Clusterweb pages at the following address. <http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/policy/offsite.cfm>.

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## **2. What is e-GO?**

The e-go (Electronic – Going Offsite) system is the Kent Local Authority online notification and approval system for offsite visits.

This has replaced the paper system where a GOF1 was completed by the visit leader, signed by the EVC, H/T or AYO and returned by post to the Outdoor Education Unit.

The e-go online system reflects the paper system – i.e. similar information required and a similar process with 'signatures' from the Visit Leader and the EVC, H/T or AYO.

From the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008 all offsite visits undertaken by schools that fall into the scope of Local Authority notification or requiring Local Authority approval must be completed on line using e-go.

From the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 all offsite visits undertaken by Youth Service staff that fall into the scope of Local Authority notification or requiring Local Authority approval must be completed on line using e-go

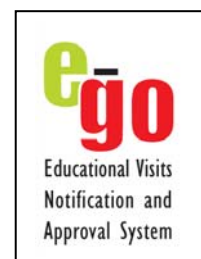
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## **3. I am going to be a Visit Leader. How do I access e-GO?**

The e-go online system is accessed via the Outdoor Education Unit web pages as found on Clusterweb. As a web based system it can be accessed 24/7 via any PC that has access to the Internet by going to the following address.

<http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/policy/offsite.cfm>

When you open our Homepage you will see the following logo. Click on the e-go logo to open the on line system.



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#### **4. How do we now NOTIFY the Local Authority of visits that take us out of County?**

Log into e-go online system. On the MyEgo page click on the NEW VISIT button. Enter the details of your visit as requested. The system is configured to recognize that if the departure and return dates are the same, and you have indicated that the visit is not adventurous that the visit requires NOTIFICATION only.

The information that you provide will be recorded on the system as a simple Notification form, and no further action is required. The information remains on the system and it is only if you were involved in a serious incident whilst on a visit that we would look at the detail. By having this accurate information available the Local Authority would be in a much better position to help and support the visit leader, the group and the school.

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#### **5. What is the difference between Local Authority APPROVAL and a NOTIFICATION?**

Local Authority APPROVAL is required for any visit that includes adventurous activities or an overnight stay. Approval is obtained via the e-go online system and is a 2-stage process.

Stage 1: Click on the NEW VISIT button and complete a pre-check to confirm that any providers you are using meet KCC requirements and are on our database of vetted providers.

Stage 2: By entering a new visit an online form is generated. This form must be completed and then passed to the EVC, H/T or AYO for internal approval before being submitted to the OEd Unit for KCC approval.

You have Local Authority approval for your visit once it has been returned to you as APPROVED and you have acted upon any conditions identified in Section 2. Please note that by obtaining approval you are also notifying the Local Authority of your visit and a separate notification is NOT required.

NOTIFICATION is required for any non-adventurous day visits that takes a group OUTSIDE the County of Kent. You can notify the Local Authority via the e-go online system and is a 1-stage process.

Stage 1: Click on the NEW VISIT button and enter the requested details. Once entered no further action is required. Please note that the visit details will remain on the e-go system but will not be viewed by the Outdoor Education Unit unless an incident occurs.

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#### **6. What is a GOF2?**

The GOF2 form is a paper based pro-forma that has been produced by the Outdoor Education Unit for establishments to adopt and adapt as required. The form can be used to record details of any educational visits that an establishment organises but only requires internal\* approval.

Internal Approval = approved only by the school or youth service

A GOF2 is not part of the Local Authority Approval system (e-GO) and therefore it should not be submitted to the Outdoor Education Unit.

If you are unfamiliar with the GOF2 form and wish to view an example follow the link below.

[http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/docs/outdoor\\_gof2.pdf](http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/docs/outdoor_gof2.pdf)

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**7. How can I complete the e-GOF when I will not know my final numbers until just before departure?**

The Outdoor Education Unit will require group numbers in order to ensure that the Local Authorities Regulations and Guidance are being followed. We also require these figures to indicate the male / female split of both participants and staff.

If you are not able to provide confirmed details when the online form is submitted by your EVC, H/T or AYO six weeks before departure, you must include an estimated number of both participants and staff. A note to this effect can be added in the text box when you 'Pass It On'. We will process the requested for approval based on the information provided and subject to the required ratios being met. **Final numbers must be inserted on your online form prior to departure.** It is the Visit Leader's responsibility to ensure that these details are inserted before departure.

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**8. What are the staff to pupil / young people ratio's?**

Supervision ratios are identified in KCC's Safe Practice of Offsite Activities (CD), Section A2: Regulations for the Conduct of Offsite Activities in the Education Service.

All figures relating to adults are a minimum. Many visits will require higher staff ratios. This will be determined by your risk assessment for each particular visit.

General supervision ratios for low risk activities can be summarised as follows:

AGE OF YOUNG PEOPLE	SCHOOL YEAR GROUP	SUPERVISION RATIO
Less than 5 years old	Pre School or Year R	Must be based on a risk assessment but no greater than one adult for every 5 children
5 - 8 years old	Years 1 - 3	One adult for every 6 pupils / young people
8 - 11 years old	Years 4 - 6	One adult for every 10 - 15 pupils / young people
11 years old upwards	Year 7 and above	One adult for every 15 - 20 pupils / young people

In addition to the above general guidelines the following specific guidelines must be followed.

TYPE OF VISIT	SUPERVISION RATIO
<b>For visits abroad</b>	One adult for every 10 pupils / young people
<b>For foreign exchange visits</b> (where pupils will be housed in homestays and not directly supervised by KCC staff)	One adult for every 15 pupils / young people

When participating in adventurous activities, the activity specific ratios identified in the relevant section of the Safe Practice of Offsite Activities (CD), Section B, must be followed.

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**9. We are planning to go ice-skating. Do we need to complete an online requested for approval?**

At present a day trip to go ice-skating is not classed as an adventurous activity by KCC and therefore does not require Local Authority approval. You do of course still require the establishments own internal approval and the EVC, H/T or AYO are responsible for ensuring that KCC's guidance is followed.

For the current definition of activities requiring Local Authority approval, follow the link below. If in doubt speak to your Educational Visit Coordinator (EVC), Headteacher (H/T) or Area Youth Officer (AYO) in the first instance.

[http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/docs/outdoor\\_approval\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/docs/outdoor_approval_guidance.pdf)

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**10. A class is planning a day visit to France. Do we need to complete an online request for approval?**

At present, day visits abroad do not require Local Authority approval. However, as the visit will take you outside the County of Kent an online notification must be completed. This is carried out on the e-go online notification and approval system and can be completed at any time before the visit departs. Such visits will also require approval by the EVC, H/T or AYO to ensure that KCC's guidance is followed.

Where the group are travelling late at night or early in the morning resulting in the itinerary showing a different start and end date (e.g. depart 9am on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> July, return 4am on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> July) the visit will not be classed as residential. L.A approval will not therefore be required as long as the group is genuinely on route in a vehicle and is not requiring berths or couchettes.

CONTACT the Outdoor Education Unit before you try to complete the online form as the e-go system will automatically assume that the visit requires Local Authority approval.

For the current definition of activities requiring Local Authority approval, follow the link below. If in doubt speak to your Educational Visit Coordinator (EVC), Headteacher (H/T) or Area Youth Officer (AYO) in the first instance.

[http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/docs/outdoor\\_approval\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/docs/outdoor_approval_guidance.pdf)

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**11. We've been visiting this centre for years and it's been fine. Why does it need vetting now?**

Providers have always required vetting to ensure that they meet the requirements set by Local Authority. Prior to the creation of the Outdoor Education Unit this responsibility fell to the Head of Establishment or Visit Leader.

The Outdoor Education Unit has taken on the task of vetting providers of residential accommodation or adventurous activities in order to: -

- Reduce the workload on establishments
- Prevent duplication of work between KCC establishments using the same providers

- Ensure that providers are being consistently vetted using the same criteria
- Ensure that the criteria used in vetting a provider meet current 'best practice' and follows national guidelines

We maintain a database of vetted providers on the e-GO online notification and approval system. If a provider is on our database you can be assured that we have vetted the provider and they do meet KCC's requirements. Any issues a visit leader will need to be aware of when using the services of a provider are include on the database.

The checks that we carry out on a Provider are repeated annually to ensure information is current and up-to-date. The checks that we do carry out on your behalf are identified on our Clusterweb pages at the following address.

[http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/UserFiles/CW/File/Policy/Outdoor\\_Education/About\\_Us/LA\\_Vetting\\_0907.doc](http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/UserFiles/CW/File/Policy/Outdoor_Education/About_Us/LA_Vetting_0907.doc)

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## **12. What happens if the online approval form is not 'passed on' to the Outdoor Education Unit by the EVC, H/T or AYO before the 6-week deadline?**

When a completed online request for Local Authority approval has been submitted with at least 6 weeks (42 calendar days) notice we will always process that request. However, if an ECV, H/T or AYO tries to 'Pass It On' to the Outdoor Education Unit inside of the 6-week deadline the system will automatically stop the process. If there are genuine reasons for a late submission the EVC, H/T or AYO must contact us. In exceptional circumstances we will be able to 'release' an online form and we will endeavor to process the request. However, it must be accepted that this may not always be possible.

Visit that can not be approved will remain on the system and will be identified as 'Visit Approval Declined' or 'Awaiting EVC Approval'. The data relating to such a visit is not deleted and remains on the system. A summary report of where visit approval has had to be declined or has not been given will be available to appropriate KCC Officers, including Local Education Officers (LEO's) and Area Education Officers (AEO's).

**Notes:** For visits that fall into the category of 'Overseas Expeditions' the deadline for submission of a completed online request is 12 weeks (84 calendar days). An overseas expedition is usually defined as a visit that involves an element of trekking into a remote area of the world often through one or more challenging environments (e.g. high mountains, jungle, deserts or similar).

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## **13. I am struggling to complete my online form? What should I do?**

You have 3 options.

Option 1: Go to the help sheets and follow the step by step guidance

Option 2: Speak to your EVC, H/T or AYO

Option 3: Contact the Outdoor Education Unit. If you are going to do this it is preferable that you do this when you have access to a PC and are able to log on to e-Go. We can then guide you through any problem as we speak. We will both be looking at the same online form.

We recognise that you do not have time to waste completing any forms so please do not struggle and become frustrated with the system. We will help.

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#### **14. Where can I find any information and advice relating to educational visits?**

For staff in school you need to identify and speak to your Educational Visit Coordinator (EVC) or Headteacher (H/T). For Youth Service staff you need to speak to your line manager and / or Area Youth Officer (AYO). Your EVC, H/T or AYO should have received training regarding the management of educational and offsite visits and should be familiar with your establishment's policies and procedures. Schools, Youth Centre's and Youth Officers were also issued a copy of KCC's Regulations and Guidance for the Safe Practice of Offsite Visits in a CD format. (Now also on-line. See Outdoor Education Unit homepage on Clusterweb)

Always refer to the relevant sections of KCC's Safe Practice Regulations and Guidance as found on the Outdoor Education Unit homepage on Clusterweb. We recommend that you navigate the content by using the 'Index.' The regulations and guidance contained within these documents are relevant to all offsite visits, not just those that require Local Authority approval. Where KCC is your employer these guidelines must be followed. If you are an Academy, Foundation or Voluntary Aided school and your employer is the schools Governing Body you should confirm if your school has adopted KCC's guidance or set its own.

Updates to this document and additional guidance can also be found on our website. This can be accessed by following the link below.

<http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/Policy/offsite.cfm>

The website also contains additional information on key subjects, resources and links to other organisations that may be of use.

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#### **15. Do we need staff to hold any specific qualifications when supervising swimming?**

Whenever groups are undertaking recreational swimming as part of an offsite visit, the activity must be supervised by a person holding the appropriate **lifeguarding** qualification. In open water situations such as the sea, inland lakes or rivers the activity must be supervised by a person holding an appropriate open water qualification. The lifeguard could be a member of the school staff or a member of the provider's staff. KCC's additional guidance relating to recreational swimming offsite and a checklist for use of offsite pools can be found by following the links below.

[http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/Policy/outdoor\\_additional2.cfm](http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/Policy/outdoor_additional2.cfm)

KCC's Health & Safety Unit have also produced a 'KCC Safe Practice in School Swimming and Water Safety Policy'. This also refers to offsite swimming and must be read in conjunction to the Additional Guidance produced by the Outdoor Education Unit. The policy is available on the Health & Safety Unit Clusterweb pages at the following address.

[http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/UserFiles/CW/File/Policy/Health\\_Safety/Swimming/KCC\\_Swimming\\_Policy\\_sept\\_07.doc](http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/UserFiles/CW/File/Policy/Health_Safety/Swimming/KCC_Swimming_Policy_sept_07.doc)

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#### **16. Our provider can not issue me a final programme / itinerary until 2 weeks before we travel. Should I wait until I have every piece of documentation in place before submitting my online request for approval?**

The short answer is no – do not wait. Your EVC, H/T or AYO must pass on your online request at least six weeks before the date of departure.

However, the Outdoor Education Unit does require a final programme that indicates morning, afternoon and evening activities for all days away from the KCC establishment, including days involved in travel.

If you are not able to provide a confirmed programme when the online request is submitted to the Outdoor Education Unit 6 weeks before departure then please include a draft programme, including any school led or evening activities. Clearly state that this is a draft programme and that the confirmed programme will follow when available. We will process the online form on this basis and grant approval where possible. **We will require a copy of the confirmed programme prior to departure.**

It is the Visit Leader's responsibility to ensure that these details are uploaded on to the relevant online form before departure. Please **DO NOT** upload **SAMPLE** programmes. These are of no help if your group should be involved in a serious incident.

We are aware that programmes can change due to factors outside of the schools control e.g. extreme weather. If you have planned for this type of eventuality and have alternative activities in mind please indicate them at the bottom of the programme in order that we can confirm that these activities also have Local Authority approval.

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### **17. If we are running a ski trip, does the visit leader need to hold any qualifications?**

If intending to run a ski trip either abroad or to Scotland the group leader must hold a Ski Course Organisers' Certificate (SCO1) and must have accompanied an experienced leader on previous ski visits. Please be aware that this qualification does not qualify the group leader to instruct or supervise skiing/snowboarding activities.

The current KCC guidance relating to snowsports can be found by following the link below. Please be aware that this is a **regulation update** and **supercedes** the original information contained in the Safe Practice CD.

[http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/Policy/outdoor\\_regs\\_updates.cfm](http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/Policy/outdoor_regs_updates.cfm)

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### **18. Do I need to visit the venue again this year prior to my visit? I carried out a risk assessment last year.**

We strongly recommend that whenever possible a pre-visit should be carried out for all venues being included in the programme. This should be considered an essential element of the risk management process.

When a pre-visit is not possible, or a venue is very familiar and has been visited within the last 12 months it may be appropriate for the visit leader to obtain up-to-date information via alternative means.

This could include: -

- Contacting the venue direct and having a discussion regarding any changes that have occurred since the last visit.
- Speaking to another group that has recently visited the venue.
- Obtaining up-to-date copies of documentation such as risk assessments or guidance notes from the venue.

Once this information has been confirmed, the risk assessment and post-visit report carried out after the previous visit should be reviewed and amended as necessary. Reference to the checks undertaken in lieu of a pre-visit should be recorded as part of the control measures.

Further guidance relating to risk management of offsite visits can be found on our Clusterweb pages at the following address - [http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/Policy/outdoor\\_risk.cfm](http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/Policy/outdoor_risk.cfm).

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**19. Do we need both male and female ‘supervisors’ on a residential when we are taking both male and female pupils?**

Current KCC guidance states that the gender of supervisory staff must reflect the gender of the young people participating in the visit for all residential visits. Therefore the following guidelines must be followed.

GENDER OF PARTICIPANTS	GENDER OF SUPERVISORS
Male and female young people	There must be at least one male and one female supervisor at all times
Male young people only	There must be at least one male supervisor at all times
Female young people only	There must be at least one female supervisor at all times

It must be noted that supervisory responsibilities in this context can only be carried out by a member of the establishment’s own staff and cannot be carried out by a member staff employed by a provider or third party organisation. For further information regarding who can be classed as being a member of the establishment’s own staff, see 19 below.

Further guidance relating to supervision arrangements can be found on our Clusterweb pages at the following address - <http://www.clusterweb.org.uk/docs/Supervision.doc>

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**20. Can somebody other than a qualified teacher be a supervisor on a visit?**

In order for a School or Youth Service group to carry out its ‘loco-parentis’ responsibilities all visits must be supervised by a member of the establishment’s own staff.

The member of the establishment’s staff acting as supervisor could fall into any of the following categories providing they are an adult and the Head of Establishment has confirmed that they are suitable and competent to carry out the responsibilities being asked of them.

- A teacher or youth worker employed by the establishment
- A member of the establishments support staff
- A volunteer (e.g. parent helper or school governor) engaged by the establishment and not employed by any third party involved in the visit

On occasions and for short time periods it may be appropriate for supervision to be ‘distant’, i.e. where a known member of staff (CRB checked) from a third party directly supervises a small group of young people. During this short period a member of the establishments own staff would be elsewhere but at the same location and quickly available should the need arise. There are very few occasions where these supervision arrangements would be suitable for an extended period of more than an hour or two.

Further guidance on the role of support staff beyond the classroom can be found on the DfES (now DCSF) website at the following address - <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=9212>

Further guidance on Supervision can be found on the DfES (now DCSF) website where you can download a copy of *A Handbook for Group Leaders* (2002) at the following address - <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/docbank/index.cfm?id=2578>

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