Tour ✦ Trust

Adaptable ✦ Travel

✦ *Simplifying* ✦

✦ School Trip ✦

✦ *Risk Assessments* ✦

Simplifying School Trip Risk Assessments

Planning Safe & Successful School Trips: A Risk Assessment Toolkit
A Practical Guide for Teachers and Group Leaders

Your school, as trip organiser, owns the risk assessment and must take reasonable steps to prevent reasonably foreseeable harm. Our information supports your assessment but does not replace it.

Introduction

Educational visits are some of the most rewarding experiences schools can offer. This guide has been developed to support teachers in understanding and preparing risk assessments, particularly for curriculum-focused trips and activities. It combines best practices, regulatory expectations, and practical advice to simplify the process.

Group leaders must always refer to their school and local government policies. This guide aims to explain, clearly and without technical jargon, the core principles of risk assessment and how these can be applied effectively to enhance group management plans.

1. What Is a Risk Assessment?

A risk assessment is the process by which hazards are identified, risks are evaluated, and appropriate control measures are implemented to ensure the safety of everyone. In the context of school travel, this is your **group management plan**—a roadmap to ensure that students return home safely and soundly.

Key Steps:

- Identify potential **hazards**.
- Determine **who may be harmed** and the extent of their harm.
- Assess the **likelihood and severity** of harm.
- Apply **control measures** to reduce risks.
- **Review and revise** as necessary.

You are already doing this informally in class—risk assessment just formalises it.

2. Why Conduct a Risk Assessment?

- **Legal and moral responsibility:** your school, as trip organiser, owns the risk assessment and must take reasonable steps to prevent reasonably foreseeable harm.
- **Planning aid**: Helps you make practical decisions, such as emergency arrangements, travel supervision, and contingency plans.
- **Evidence of due diligence**: A well-recorded risk assessment shows you acted responsibly if anything goes wrong.

3. Reducing Your Workload: Using a Tour Operator

Tour operators like Adaptable Travel can significantly lighten your load:

- They assess **transport, accommodation, excursions, and activities** for safety.
- **Protect your money with ATOL (trips with flights) or an ABTA bond (all other trips).**
- Supply **relevant documentation** to support your school's risk assessments.

However, *teachers still need to assess group-specific risks*, as operators are not aware of their students' individual needs.

What Adaptable Travel Does for You

At Adaptable Travel, student safety is at the heart of everything we do. We check the accommodation, coaches and visits in your package against our TourTrust standards.

Accommodation
All accommodation providers we use are subject to checks to ensure they meet local and national safety regulations. Risk assessments include:

- Valid operating licences and appropriate insurance (public liability and indemnity)
- Fire safety protocols and checks of gas/electrical systems
- Food hygiene standards
- On-site security measures
- Pool safety, where applicable

Transport
We work only with trusted coach companies and travel operators who meet high safety and operational standards:

- Valid UK and EU operating licences
- Up-to-date vehicle maintenance and emergency protocols
- Appropriate travel and liability insurance
- Coaches fitted with seat belts (note: overseas regulations may vary)
- CRB/DBS-checked drivers where appropriate

Air, rail, and ferry transport used as part of any tour complies with the safety requirements set by the relevant national and international governing bodies, including the Civil Aviation Authority and Maritime and Coastguard Agency.

Note: Standards on public transport used during the trip may vary and are not within our direct control.

Excursions and Activities
Every excursion or activity we include is reviewed for suitability and safety. We verify that:

- Providers hold valid licences and insurance
- Activities meet our internal safety benchmarks
- Equipment is appropriate and fit for purpose
- Instructors are properly qualified where necessary

Ongoing Monitoring

We don't stop at pre-trip checks. We actively monitor supplier performance through feedback from teachers and group leaders. This helps us maintain consistent safety standards across all destinations.

Your Role as Group Leader
While we provide extensive support, it is essential to remember that group leaders remain responsible for conducting risk assessments specific to their group. It is the duty of both the school and the group leader to ensure that all reasonably foreseeable risks are assessed and managed appropriately.
We can supply information to help, but as we do not know your students or staff, we cannot complete risk assessments on your behalf.

4. The Safety Management Process

Step 1: Initial Planning
Start early. Discuss your plans with your Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) and colleagues.

- Consider the **context** of the venue (e.g., the Eiffel Tower = a public space, height, and crowds).
- Focus on **group management**, not managing the venue itself.

Step 2: Generic Risk Assessments (GRAs)
Build reusable templates for common activities:

- Travel by coach
- Ferry or air travel
- Accommodation
- Public spaces
- Museum or theme park visits

These serve as building blocks for more specific plans.

Step 3: Event-Specific Risk Assessment (ESRA)
Tailor your plan to the unique nature of the group:

- Age, behaviour, SEND needs, medical concerns, etc.
- Supervision style (remote or close)
- Travel dynamics (e.g., pairing pupils)

Example: An amusement park visit will need different controls for a primary group than for older students.

Step 4: Control Measures
Use a combination of:

- **Supervision**: Ratios, dispersal of adults, patrols
- **Protection**: Weather gear, sunblock, ID markers
- **Training**: Code of conduct, pre-visit briefings

Step 5: Plan B and Emergencies
Think through basic "What Ifs":

- What if it rains?
- What if a student gets sick?

- What if a teacher is injured?

Include emergency procedures, including:

- Central meeting points and times
- Emergency contacts for all staff/students
- First-aid access

Review plans daily during the trip to stay dynamic.

5. Recording and Reviewing Risk Assessments

Use your school or LEA's approved format. Key aspects to document:

- Hazards
- Who may be harmed
- Existing control measures
- Further actions needed
- Residual risk level
- Review notes

🔁 At trip's end, **reflect** with your team. Store your documents for future reference and continuous improvement.

6. Further Support and Resources

- **Educational Visit Coordinator (EVC)**: Your first point of contact
- **DfE Standards**: *Standards for LEAs in Overseeing Educational Visits*
- **OEAP National Guidance**: www.oeapng.info
- **Health & Safety Executive (HSE)**: www.hse.gov.uk

Final Reminders for Teachers

- ☑ Start early and involve others
- ☑ Focus on significant risks, not every tiny possibility
- ☑ Use past trip assessments as templates
- ☑ Always plan for "What Ifs"
- ☑ Stay dynamic and adapt on the ground