

# The 'How To' of Risk Assessments

We often get asked whether or not we can fill in risk assessments for school trips. As much as we would love to help, the short answer is we can't. Because every group is different, completing risk assessments is solely the responsibility of the school/group leader. What we can do, however, is offer some guidance on completing them.

## A. Do your research

Understanding and acknowledging the risks should enable you to plan a successful trip – not stand in your way. One way to help you understand is to do your research. There are governing bodies that offer tonnes of advice on risk assessment planning for school trips. Two of the leading school travel bodies are:

[www.schooltravelforum.com](http://www.schooltravelforum.com)  
[www.oepng.info](http://www.oepng.info)

## B. Ask your colleagues or EVC for advice

Chances are that other teachers in your school have completed risk assessments. They may even have templates that you can use. Your EVC should be able to offer you advice on the kind of risks you are likely to take on your trip and help you manage them. Often the questions you should ask are 'What could go wrong?' and 'What are you going to do about it?'

### Practical Advice from Teachers

Here is some advice from **Rosa Flanagan – Head of RS at St Mary's School**

#### 1. Here is some good advice for a teacher taking a trip for the first time

Ensure the itinerary is suited to the needs of the students and when planning activities consider if all students are able to take part and if activities will be optional or compulsory.

Check all staff are confident with routes/ location. We always take experienced staff and give them all defined roles before we set off on any activity.

Imagine 'Would I be happy allowing my child to do this?'

Don't do anything too adventurous first time round and keep numbers small until you become familiar with running the trip.

Take a visit there if possible, it really helps to have seen it first!

#### 2. When is the best time to complete it?

Once you have finalised all of your itinerary so you don't forget anything.

#### 3. It's easy to over complicate risk assessments. How can you keep it simple?

Ensure all activities are covered.

Use templates provided by the school/LEA - you don't have to make your own.

Many completed assessments from different trips over lap and ask an experienced member of staff.

Don't do anything too 'dangerous'.

#### 4. Do you have one piece of advice when dealing with risk assessments?

Make sure you check against your itinerary so you haven't missed anything out!

#### 5. What would you want to see in a guide for risk assessments?

How to calculate risks and how much detail needs to be given.

#### 6. Is there anywhere in particular that you go to for advice?

The Education Trips Officer in school or a member of staff who has organised many a trip!



### Practical Advice from Teachers

**Sophie Martin EVC at Painsley School had the following advice;**

#### 1. Here is some good advice for a teacher taking a trip for the first time

Make sure you have researched where you are going in advance and taken advice from the Travel Consultants in terms of the itinerary.

Do a head count every five minutes!

#### 2. It's easy to over complicate risk assessments. How can you keep it simple?

Our risk assessments are very complicated and long but once you've got them they pretty much stay the same.

#### 3. When is the best time to complete it?

As soon as you can.

#### 4. Do you have one piece of advice when dealing with risk assessments?

Ask for some examples of them so that it doesn't make it so difficult for you to make them up from scratch.

#### 5. What would you want to see in a guide for risk assessments?

The dos and don'ts of a venue or particular method of transport.

#### 6. Is there anywhere in particular that you go to for advice?

I ask colleagues and the travel consultants at WST if I'm not sure.

## C. See what your tour operator can offer you

Once you book your trip your tour operator should be able to hand you some generic risk assessments to guide you.

Read some of our customer's stories on how we supported them through an emergency situation [here](#)

Download our latest School Travel Forum certificate [here](#)

You can also download our latest Quality Badge for Learning Outside the Classroom [here](#)

**TOP TIP:** Keep in mind special requirements such as disabilities, allergies and dietary requirements.

**"Our customers safety is of utmost importance. We are always happy to offer safety advice and guidance when needed. If you have any concerns please contact your tour operator."**

Sheelagh Clegg, our Contracts Manager