



**CHILDREN AND YOUNG
PEOPLE'S DEPARTMENT**

SCHOOL VISITS TO FARMS

POLICY & GUIDANCE

HS/ECS/040

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**THIS DOCUMENT REPLACES
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**Children and Young
People's Department**



2002-2003
Community Legal Services
2003-2004
Transforming Secondary Education
Child and Adolescent Mental Health
Services
2006-2007
Positive Youth Engagement

HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDANCE

SCHOOL VISITS TO FARMS

Introduction

The need for thorough planning of a school trip cannot be overstated. Farm visits have added complications due to the potentially hazardous equipment, materials, vehicles, animals and health risks etc. It is important that pre-visit inspections are made to the farm and that thorough discussion with the farmer or farm manager as to the safety of pupils is made. The Health & Safety Executive have issued guidance on this type of visit, the advice and guidance provided by them is incorporated into the general advice given in this paper or is attached as an appendix.

Checklists

Two health and safety checklists are provided to assist in the safe planning of a farm visit, these should be used in addition to other LA forms such as Form 6 and MSH2.

- 1) Farmer's Safety Checklist; and
- 2) Teacher's Safety Checklist; these are attached in Appendix 1

Health Guidance

There has been much talk about the health risks associated with farm visits, there will always be risk when persons come into contact with animals, soils, vegetation and water. The principles of **Good Hygiene** should always be followed by schools, including the washing of hands after any contact with animals or water and before any drinks or food is taken. Schools may wish to take medi-wipes or other cleaning tissues to help them in this practice.

Sound guidance can be found in:

- ◆ HSE Guidance: "Avoiding ill health at open farms - Advice to teachers" is attached in Appendix 2.
- ◆ "E.Coli 0157 - The Facts" published by Wirral Borough Council's Environmental Health Department is attached in Appendix 3.

Risk Assessment

All teachers **must** consider **Wirral Education Department's** Guidance HS/ECS/006 "Risk Assessment". No trip should take place until the appointed person for school visits is satisfied that:

- 1) all hazards associated with the trip have been identified;
- 2) all control measures to ensure health and safety are in place and understood by all parties concerned;
- 3) any further control measures to reduce risk to staff or pupils are implemented, so far as is reasonably practicable.

Copies of this guidance should be available in all schools, for further copies please contact the Health and Safety Section on 666 4693/5603.

Educational Visits, Overnight Stays and Hazardous Activities - HS/ECS/036

This document provides schools with all the necessary information on planning visits, notifying parents, arranging insurance, obtaining LA permission for a visit, risk assessment etc.

Every school must ensure that these procedures are adhered to.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Health and Safety Section should you require any further information Tel 666 4693, 666 5602, 666 5603.

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services

Teacher's safety check list:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss visit arrangements in advance with farmer. • Ask about areas on the farm strictly out of bounds for children. • How many adults will be needed for adequate supervision? Can the farmer provide any? <i>Small groups of children are easier to manage</i> • Are there things the children can do safely? • Can animals be viewed safely? <i>Tell children how to behave near animals. Are there any they can touch and feel?</i> • Can the children safely see farm machinery operating? <p>Is farm transport provided, and made safe for children? <i>Children may not, by law, drive or ride on tractors or other farm vehicles, except on high sided trailers.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your class know about farm hazards: <i>Poisonous substances; farm vehicles and machinery; animals (especially those with young), objects such as tyres or gates propped up against walls; poorly stacked bales etc, fragile roofs; slurry pits, lethal gases in confined spaces.</i> • Children should be forbidden to eat sweets, crisps etc while on the farm. Make sure they wash their hands before leaving the farm, or before eating. • Check that you know your local education authority's guidelines on school trips. <p>To get the most out of your farm visit read <i>Learning from the Land</i> available free from the Association of Agriculture, 16-20 Strutton Gardens, London, SW1P, with an A5 sae.</p> <p>A teacher's pack, <i>A Day on the Farm</i>, for 6-11 year olds, is available free from the Health and Safety Executive (015 1-95 1-4456).</p>
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Farmer's safety check list:

<p>Assess the hazards on your farm and ensure the teacher is aware of them.</p> <p>Is the teacher aware of changes and how to avoid them?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will children be able to view things safely? <i>Are animals well penned or fenced in, machinery properly guarded etc?</i> • Are areas out of bounds and secure? <i>Eg slurry pits fenced, access barred where necessary and chemicals locked away.</i> • Do your workers know to watch out for children on day of visit? <i>Can any be asked to demonstrate their work without risk to children?</i> • Are loose items - gates, tractor tyres, bales, boxes and pallets - properly secured? • Can the children be safely transported about the farm? 	<p>If by trailer, get details guidance from your local Agricultural Inspector.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What activities may the children participate in? <i>Supervision is essential. Remember, children may not drive or ride on tractors or other field machines, operate some farm equipment, enter the pens of dangerous animals or handle pesticides.</i> • Ensure there is warm water and towels for children to wash their hands after the visit. <p>For further details on avoiding accidents to children on farms, get the Health and Safety Executive's Approved Code of Practice, <i>Preventing Accidents to Children in Agriculture</i>, available From Government Bookshops.</p> <p><i>Learning from the Land</i> will provide guidance on successful School visits — see over for details.</p> <p>If in doubt, contact your local Agricultural Inspector, under Health and Safety Executive in the telephone book.</p>
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AVOIDING ILL HEALTH AT OPEN FARMS – ADVICE TO TEACHERS

AIS23 Supplement

Introduction

This supplement to AIS23 *Avoiding ill health at open farms - Advice to farmers* contains advice for teachers and others who organise visits to farms. One of the highlights of such visits is seeing and possibly contacting animals, and this supplement advises on controlling the risk of infections contracted from them.

All animals naturally carry a range of micro-organisms, some of which can be transmitted to humans, where they may cause ill health. Some infections which may be contracted on farms, such as the verocytotoxin-producing bacterium *Escherichia coli* 0157 (*E coli* 057), present a serious hazard and potentially cause severe disease.

While the hazard from infection resulting from a farm visit is real, the risks are readily controlled by familiar measures which should be an everyday part of life. The following sensible steps will help make your visit even more safe, healthy and enjoyable.

Before your visit:

- discuss visit arrangements with the farm management;
- assure yourself that the facilities provided match the recommendations in the main AIS23 information sheet;
- decide what the ratio of pupils to teachers/assistants/parents should be. As a general rule, there should be one supervisor to every eight children under eight years old. If supervision levels are less than this, consider whether you should not allow direct contact with the animals for children under eight;
- discuss with pupils the rules for the visit, stressing that they must not eat or chew outside the areas in which you permit them to do so;
- make sure that pupils wear appropriate clothing, including sturdy outdoor shoes (not sandals) or wellington boots if possible;
- check that cuts, grazes etc on children's hands are covered with a waterproof dressing.

During and after the visit, make sure that the children:

- do not kiss animals;
- always wash their hands thoroughly before eating, after any contact with animals and again before leaving the farm;
- eat only in designated areas;
- do not eat food which has fallen to the ground;
- do not suck fingers or put hands, pens, pencils or crayons etc in mouths;
- do not taste animal foods, ie eat only food that they have brought with them, or food for human consumption they have bought on the farm;
- clean or change their footwear before leaving, remembering to wash their hands after any contact with animal faeces on their footwear.

Check that the children stay in their allocated groups during the visit, and that they:

- do not use or pick up tools (eg spades and forks) unless permitted to do so by farm staff;
- do not climb on to walls or animal pens etc;
- listen carefully and follow the instructions and information given by the farm staff;
- approach and handle animals quietly and gently;
- do not chase, frighten or torment the animals.

Remember:

- the children are your responsibility during the visit;
- you should supervise them during the visit, in particular during hand washing to make sure that each child washes thoroughly. Farm staff may be able to help you with this supervision;
- allow plenty of time before eating or leaving so that the children do not have to rush.

If a member of your group shows signs of illness (eg sickness or diarrhoea) after a visit, advise them or their parent/guardian to visit the doctor and explain that they have had recent contact with animals.

E.COLI 0157 – THE FACTS

WHAT IS E.COLI 0157?

E.Coli 0157 is an illness caused by bacteria. The illness normally starts 1-6 days after the bacteria enters the body.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS?

The symptoms may include diarrhoea, often containing blood, vomiting and severe abdominal pain. A severe attack can lead to long term problems with your kidneys.

IS THERE ANY TREATMENT?

There is no special treatment and most sufferers recover naturally. If you are suffering with diarrhoea you should drink plenty of fluids. If the diarrhoea is severe or contains blood you should consult your doctor for further advice.

HOW IS E. COLI 0157 SPREAD?

The illness may be spread from person to person or by the consumption of undercooked meats, particularly beef products or from the consumption of unpasteurised or contaminated milk products.

WHEN CAN I GO BACK TO WORK/SCHOOL?

If E.Coli 0157 is identified in persons in high risk groups (Risk groups 1-4), they should stay away from work/school until two negative faecal specimens taken 48 hours apart have been obtained. If you suspect you or any member of your family is suffering with this illness you must consult your doctor or your local environmental health department for further advice.

HOW CAN THE RISK OF ILLNES BE REDUCED?

- Thorough hand washing after using or cleaning the toilet.
- Ensure all meats and meat products are adequately cooked, all burgers should be cooked until the juices run clear.
- Do not allow raw foods to come into contact with cooked foods.
- Toilet seats, flush handles, door handles and taps should be thoroughly washed on a regular basis with hot soapy water.
- Members of the household should each use their own flannel and towel.

- Soiled clothes should be rinsed and then washed in very hot water.
- Thorough handwashing after stroking animals at a zoo or farm.

GENERAL HYGIENE ADVICE

Remember you should regularly wash your hands with warm water and soap but especially:

- After using or cleaning the toilet.
- After changing nappies.
- Before eating or preparing foods.
- After handling raw foods.
- After handling pets.
- After gardening.

OTHER INFORMATION LEAFLETS AVAILABLE:

- Salmonella.
- Campylobacter.
- Cryptosporidiosis.
- Giardiasis.
- Shigellosis.
- Hepatitis A.

This advice has been reproduced from the Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council's Environmental Health Department, Westminster House.