



ETC International College

Group Leader Responsibilities

December 2025

GROUP LEADER: RESPONSIBILITIES DURING ACTIVITY PROGRAMMES

Information for all staff dealing with junior students (specifically Group Leaders, Activities Organisers and Teachers accompanying groups of students from overseas).

Responsibility:

The Group leader has overall responsibility for the group at all times. They are responsible for delegating supervisory roles to other adults / leaders in the group. All group leaders must attend all excursions and activities or have in place suitable supervision provisions.

It is good practice for the Group Leader to:

- allocate supervisory responsibility to each adult for named pupils
- ensure that each adult knows which students they are responsible for
- ensure that each student knows which adult is responsible for them
- ensure that all adults understand that they are responsible to the group leader for the supervision of the pupils assigned to them
- ensure that all adults and students are aware of the expected standards of behaviour, ETC code of conduct and have read their accommodation terms and conditions (host family or Residence)

It is good practice for each supervisor / adult leaders to:

- have prior knowledge of the students including any special educational needs, medical needs, disabilities or behavioural problems.
- carry a list/register of all group members at all times
- directly supervise the students – particularly important during lunch and break times and when they are mingling with the public and may not be easily identified
- regularly check that the entire group is present
- have a clear plan of the activity or excursion to be undertaken and its objectives
- have the means to contact the group leader/other supervisors if needing help
- anticipate a potential risk by recognising a hazard and arriving where necessary at the point of hazard before the students and informing relevant personnel depending on activity
- continuously monitor the physical and mental condition of the group members and the suitability of the prevailing conditions
- be competent to exercise appropriate control of the group, and to ensure that students abide by the agreed standards of behaviour. A disciplinary procedure should also be in place.
- clearly understand the emergency procedures and be able to carry them out
- have appropriate access to First Aid and know the ETC first aid procedures Each

Students should:

- know who their supervisor is at any given time and how to contact him or her
- have been given clear, understandable and appropriate instructions
- never be left on their own or with a single member of ETC staff
- alert the supervisor if someone is missing or in difficulties

- have a meeting place to return to or an instruction to remain where they are, if separated
- understand and accept the expected standards of behaviour
- always carry their ETC student card on them.

Head counts

Especially on excursions, head counts should take place particularly before leaving any venue. It is good practice for all **group leaders** to:

- carry a list/register of all students and adults involved in the activity/excursion at all times
- ensure that students are readily identifiable, especially if the visit is to a densely populated area.
- ensure that all students are aware of meeting points and times
- ensure that all students know what to do if they become separated from the group
- ensure that all students know what to do if they become separated from the group
- ensure that all students are counted on all coaches, especially if they disembark the coach at a service station or garage. Ensure they are counted again before departure.

'Buddy' system

We recommend that each child is paired with a partner or "buddy". Each regularly checks that the other is okay and present. If for any reason there "buddy" is missing then they must notify their group leader immediately.

Remote Supervision

Supervision can be close or remote but is always 24 hours:

- close supervision occurs when the group remain within sight and contact of the supervisor
- remote supervision occurs when, as part of planned activities, a group works away from the supervisor but is subject to stated controls (for example, during treasure hunts)
- Recreational or Free time – for example during the evenings – may involve close or remote supervision, but should not be unsupervised - the group leaders continue to be in charge, they cannot disappear for dinner to bed early.
- it is essential that everyone involved in the group understands the supervision arrangements and expectations.

When supervision is remote:

- Students should be sufficiently trained and assessed as competent for the level of activity to be undertaken, including first aid and emergency procedures
- Students will be familiar with the environment or similar environments and have details of the meeting points and times.
- clear and understandable boundaries will be set for the group
- there must be clear lines of communication between the group, the group leader and the school. Do not rely exclusively on mobile phones.
- the group leader should monitor the group's progress at appropriate intervals
- the group leader should be able to reach the group reasonably promptly should the group need support in an emergency
- there should be a recognisable point at which the activity is completed
- there should be clear arrangements for the abandonment of the activity where it cannot be safely completed.
- there should always be a PLAN B...this is will be arranged by ETC activity staff.

Rearranging Groups and Activity Schedules

Potential danger points can occur when rearranging groups. It is therefore important that the group leader ensures no changes are made to group configurations during the stay. Once a group activity schedule has been confirmed the group leader will not be able to change any of the activities (unless it is due to unforeseen circumstances such as weather, or museum closure, etc...) Amongst other things this ensures that parents are aware of what activity the students are doing and when. This is an ETC policy and so will be strictly enforced. Please do not try and change activity schedules once you have arrived in the UK.

Free Time

Group leaders should ensure that pupils continue to be properly supervised during free time, especially before, between and after activities, including the evenings and weekends. A group occupied in study or activity is far safer than a group left to its own devices in an unfamiliar environment / country. Too much unstructured free time in a programme can allow time for mischief, bullying, homesickness and wandering off from the main group.

It is good practice to:

- ensure that all staff and students understand the standards of behaviour that apply at all times, not just during activities
- ensure that handover between activities and free time is properly supervised, with a named group leader responsible for the group if there is free-time between activities
- ensure that all group leaders understand that their supervisory role continues in the evening – however hard a day it has been!
- use free-time in the evening or at the beginning of the day to brief the group on the planned activities for the day to come, e.g. the activities, organise lunch vouchers, specific health and safety issues, meal and break times.
- use free time after activities for personal learning and group discussion about the highs and lows of the day – get feedback from the group
- apply the advice contained in “Remote Supervision” above, adapted as necessary, if it is felt reasonable to allow students some time without close supervision
- occupy the group with mildly active, non-academic activities in the evening, for example, craft activities, environmental activities, quizzes, team challenges. Ask ETC Activity staff for ideas.

Travel

A driver cannot safely drive and supervise children at the same time. Group leaders should ensure that:

- travel by coach / minibus - Students wear seat belts at ALL times.
- there is adequate supervision at all times when travelling to and from activities
- supervisors are reserved seats that allow them to supervise properly
- students are supervised when boarding and leaving the coaches / minibus
- extra care is taken when leaving a vehicle in a country that drives on the right as some doors may open onto the road side
- standards of behaviour are met, and in particular that drivers are not distracted
- smoking / alcohol bans are observed
- evacuation procedures are clearly understood by everyone, luggage is securely stored and emergency exits are kept clear
- head counts are carried out when the group is getting off or onto transport

Behaviour problems, illness or injury

- poor behaviour may be reduced by ensuring that all pupils are signed up to agreed standards of behaviour before or at least at the beginning of the trip.
- if one adult has to give prolonged attention to one group member, the group leader should reassess the supervisory roles of the other adults to ensure that all members of the group know who is responsible for them. Activities may need to be amended until the other adult returns all of his or her attention to the group
- group leaders should trust their own knowledge of the young people and use their own professional judgement
- this may include challenging an activity leader where the group leader's knowledge of the group is superior, or intervening to prompt a change of plan.

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Next update due December 2026