

Much outdoor learning takes place with very low levels of risk but, on occasion, risk may be at a more significant level. It is desirable to balance risks and benefits in any experience to ensure that actions are proportionate and reasonable. There is a legal requirement for a process of risk assessment to take place in many outdoor learning contexts. This is important, but we should not lose sight of the benefits to be had from the experience and the need to balance these against the risks.

When planning outdoor activities, you should consider:

- 1 the dangers and difficulties which may arise and how to reduce them
- 2 appropriate staffing
- 3 weather forecasts
- 4 tide tables (if relevant)
- 5 sources of appropriate technical advice
- 6 any relevant local authority guidance

Each activity has its own more specific risk assessment in the Teacher notes relating to the activity itself. However, you will need to assess the risks associated with the actual outdoor space that you choose to use, for example a patch of poisonous plants growing near to where the learners will be undertaking activities. For further information on poisonous plants, the website <http://www.realgardeners.co.uk/poisonousplants.htm> is helpful. However, this is only in English.

To plan an outdoor activity, schools will have their own Health and Safety policies in place, as agreed with BCBC.