

Statement on Under 18 Supervision Ratios and Safe Supervision Levels

1. Purpose

Oxford International (OIES) is committed to maintaining a safe environment for all students, including those under 18. Supervision levels for on-site activities and off-site visits are determined through a **documented risk assessment** and safe-supervision planning, in line with Department for Education (DfE) guidance on educational visits.

2. What the guidance says about ratios

DfE guidance emphasises that some visits require risk assessment, detailed planning and competent leadership, but **does not mandate fixed staff-to-student ratios**. Schools and providers must set supervision levels based on the risks and needs of the specific activity and group.

Oxford International therefore uses:

- **risk assessment** to set supervision levels for each activity/visit, and
- **minimum baseline ratios** (below) as a starting point, which may be increased where risks require it.

3. Minimum baseline supervision ratios (Oxford International Schools)

These baseline ratios apply to **supervised on-site activities and off-site excursions** organised by the school, unless a higher ratio is required by risk assessment, venue rules, transport type, or student needs.

- **Ages 8–10:** minimum **1:15 students**
- **Ages 11–15:** minimum **1:20 students**
- **Ages 16–17:** minimum **1:30 students** *only for low-risk, local, daytime activities*

Important safeguard: Oxford International will **increase staffing** where required, including (for example) where there are:

- higher-risk environments (e.g., large cities, water, evening travel)
- students with additional needs, medical needs or behavioural risks
- overnight stays or complex transport arrangements
- mixed groups where safeguarding considerations indicate increased supervision

Minimum number of adults: We aim to have **at least two responsible adults** available for any off-site visit (and wherever reasonably practicable for on-site activities), so that emergencies can be managed effectively and supervision maintained.

These ratios apply to both on site activities and off site excursions. If an activity/excursion is risk assessed to be in need of higher ratios of staff, staffing will be increased accordingly.

Further to this, we apply the following supervision guidelines for free time on scheduled excursions (as highlighted in policy for unsupervised time)

- Under 12 years old – no unsupervised free time. Must remain with OIEG staff or group leader at all times
- 12-14 years old – one hour unsupervised free time before returning to meeting point for registration (must stay in groups of min 3 students)
- 15-17 years old – two hours' unsupervised free time before returning to meeting point for registration (must stay in

groups of min 3 students)

4. How we decide the final supervision level (risk assessment factors)

The Operation Manager/Activity Leader sets the supervision level through a written risk assessment, taking account of:

- age, maturity and known behaviour of the group
- any SEND/medical needs (including medication, allergies, anxiety, etc.)
- activity type and environment (crowds, remote areas, water, night-time, etc.)
- transport type and journey duration
- venue requirements and safeguarding arrangements
- staff competence, experience and first aid provision
- the need for contingency supervision if a student becomes separated or unwell

5. Role of Group Leaders and other accompanying adults

Where group students travel with their own Group Leaders (responsible adults), Oxford International staff remain responsible for overall safety management and safeguarding.

- Group Leaders **may support communication and day-to-day supervision** of their own group.
- For safeguarding consistency, **Oxford International does not automatically “count” Group Leaders** towards the minimum ratio unless their role, responsibilities, suitability and safeguarding checks are confirmed for that visit/activity.
- Group Leaders will be briefed and required to follow Oxford International instructions and emergency procedures.

6. Safeguarding, Recruitment and Suitability of Staff

Oxford International is committed to ensuring that all staff working with students under the age of 18 are suitable, appropriately trained, and aware of their safeguarding responsibilities.

- All staff involved in the supervision of under 18s are recruited in line with safer recruitment practices
- Staff are subject to appropriate pre-employment checks, including an enhanced DBS check (or equivalent, where applicable)
- All staff receive safeguarding training appropriate to their role and are expected to follow the school’s safeguarding and child protection procedures
- A Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is in place, with responsibility for overseeing safeguarding and responding to concerns

Only Oxford International staff are responsible for the supervision of under 18s during organised activities and excursions.

Where Group Leaders accompany students, they support their own group but do not replace Oxford International staff and are not responsible for overall safeguarding or supervision of the wider student body.

7. First aid and emergency response

Oxford International ensures that activities and visits have appropriate **first aid provision** and clear emergency procedures. A designated lead adult is appointed for each visit/activity, with responsibility for:

- registers/headcounts and meeting points
- incident management and escalation
- contact with the school and emergency services where required

8. Specialist activities

Oxford International does not require all supervising staff to hold specialist qualifications for general low-risk activities. Where an activity is specialist or higher risk, we ensure that:

Oxford International English ratios on trips updated September 2025. To be reviewed September 2026.

- appropriately qualified providers/staff are used, and
- supervision levels are increased as needed based on risk assessment and provider requirements.

9. 16–17 year olds on adult programmes (clarity about supervision)

Where 16–17 year olds are enrolled on adult programmes, they may experience a **lower level of supervision outside classes** than on junior programmes. Oxford International therefore provides clear rules, safety guidance and welfare contacts, and ensures parents/guardians are informed accurately before enrolment.