

**IMMEDIATE**  
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## **NASUWT RESPONSE TO THE HSE REPORT ON THE DROWNING OF A TEN-YEAR-OLD BOY DURING A SCHOOL ACTIVITY**

Commenting on the publication today by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) of the report of the drowning of a ten-year-old boy during a school activity weekend in the Lake District in 2002, **Chris Keates, General Secretary of NASUWT**, the largest union representing teachers and headteachers throughout the UK, said:

"Our thoughts and sympathies are with the family of Max Palmer. The publication of the HSE Report into his death will inevitably raise painful memories for the friends and family of a boy whose life was so tragically cut short.

"The recommendations of the HSE are welcome.

"The recognition of the need to address the lack of consistency of the role of Local Education Authorities and school managers in the planning, monitoring and validating of educational visits highlights one of the major issues which NASUWT has already raised with the DfES and is under discussion.

"NASUWT also agrees with the HSE that risk assessment and quality of staff training must be improved significantly.

"It is disappointing that the Report apparently fails to recommend that employers should provide a greater degree of support to staff who accompany visits when problems arise, particularly on the very rare occasions when a tragedy occurs.

"This Report will inevitably, and quite rightly, raise questions about the nature of activities in which it is appropriate for schools to engage, particularly very high risk activities such as the 'plunge pooling' which led to this tragedy.

"NASUWT has already called for existing DfES standards to be applied rigorously and consistently by local education authorities to all visits to eliminate the more dubious or high risk ones and to ensure that the activity is appropriate and has educational value.

"NASUWT has maintained consistently that education outside the classroom can provide valuable educational experience and curriculum enrichment providing it is planned, properly resourced, linked to the curriculum and has clearly identified learning outcomes.

"The HSE Report demonstrates yet again the validity of the concerns NASUWT has raised with the Government about educational visits.

"As a result of the work we have undertaken with the DfES and the progress made it is pleasing to note that many of the issues identified in the Report are already being addressed."