

Visits and Trips Policy

Document Details

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Keeping Young People Safe from Harm, Abuse and Neglect

Visits and Trips Policy

Introduction

Many leaders have families of their own and are quite used to organising family outings. But youth club visits and trips involve larger numbers and it follows that there will be an expectation that extra care will be taken on the part of those in charge. Whether you are planning a visit to the local ice skating rink or thinking about going further afield, the over-riding consideration must be for the safety of the young people and adults involved.

Inevitably, some challenging activities will carry an element of risk, either to participants or property. However, consideration of these risks at the planning stage will go a long way to reducing and managing them. There are three categories of visits:

- Local visit e.g. local ice rink, local environmental project
- Residential e.g. involving at least one overnight stay
- Adventurous Activities e.g. abseiling, rifle shooting, etc

The guidelines set out in the following pages apply only to visits organised within mainland UK. More detailed guidelines apply for visits abroad.

Initial Planning

The more advance planning which can be done the smoother will be the preparations. So allow plenty of time. You will feel less pressure and be able to think about the extra details which can make the difference between an average outing and a more memorable one for the young people (and more enjoyable for you).

Set up a small working group which should include some of the young people who will be involved in the visit. This will increase their understanding of the planning required and provide a valuable link with the other participants in adopting an acceptable code of conduct during the trip. Ideally, an experienced Group Leader and deputy should be appointed who will have responsibility for the following:

- To manage the group and lead the accompanying adult team
- To brief the young people, parents and adult team
- To determine the appropriate level of first aid/medical need and nominate the appropriate responsible adult
- To actively involve the young people in the risk assessment management process
- To agree procedure to be followed should an emergency occur and appoint a person designated as Home Contact

Other accompanying adults should be clear about their individual roles and responsibilities and all should be aware of Health & Safety issues. In addition, CRB clearance will be necessary for additional adult helpers required to satisfy supervision ratios. Adults should be allocated particular tasks depending on their experience/qualifications in relation to the programme and will probably include:

- finance
- first aid
- pastoral care

1.Ratios

Adult/young people ratios will depend on the make-up of the group and the activity involved. However, as a guide, the recommended ratios are:

- Local visits – 1 adult / 10 young people
- Residential Visits/Adventurous activities – 1 adult / 8 young people

Where adventurous activities are involved any additional criteria laid down by trained instructors must be strictly adhered to.

2.Costings

This is an important part of organising a visit, especially as you will want to make it accessible to every young person. Work out detailed costings before committing to a visit and consider the following:

- Transport (including fuel if hiring a self-drive vehicle)
- Entrance/Activity fees
- Clothing and equipment to be bought or hired separately
- Refreshments
- Accommodation (if an overnight trip)
- Food
- Emergency Fund

When your costings are clear you will need to decide whether you can afford to subsidise the costs from club funds. Fundraising for a particular visit is another option and this is a good way of involving parents in the club. You may even discover they have some useful skills to offer the Management Committee.

It is strongly recommended that separate accounts are kept for each trip. (See Appendix 2:7 for a sample). These should be available for inspection at the post event meeting.

3.Information for Parents

Written permission must be obtained from parents/guardians for all young people to participate in activities. The initial information supplied to parents/guardians must specify the activities involved to allow them to make an informed decision as to their son's/daughter's participation. Any changes to the plans, particularly where the risks involved might be greater than those described earlier, must be relayed to parents. You should also ensure at this stage that you have the necessary Photography Permission Forms completed (See Part 1 - Appendix 13a)

(See Appendices 2:8 and 2:2 for a sample Letter to Parents and Consent Form for visits/events)

For residential events or adventurous activities, parents/guardians need to be aware of your plans and a meeting with them is an essential part of the planning process. Two weeks before the event is a good time to arrange this meeting and all adults leading and accompanying the group, including the Home Contact, should be present. This will be an ideal opportunity for sharing your plans, making the itinerary available, ensuring all necessary paperwork has been completed and returned and also to show samples of appropriate clothing required. This is also a good time to seek some practical support from parents e.g. loading and unloading equipment etc.

It is also likely that some parents will wish to discuss the individual needs of their son/daughter and you should set aside time so that this can be done privately at the end of the meeting.

If parents are unable to attend the meeting and cannot meet the group leader at another time, it is recommended that a letter be sent containing all the information relayed at the meeting.

4.Pre-Event Visit

Wherever possible, a pre-event visit is strongly recommended. In some cases, this will be essential in carrying out your risk assessment management plan. In addition, it will assist in establishing a rapport with the staff at the venue, checking accommodation arrangements, building up your knowledge of the local area and services available, transport links, accessibility etc. (see Appendix 2:9 for a sample Provider Checklist) It is quite likely that you will need to alter some of your initial plans as a result of this visit.

Risk Assessment

Your visit should reveal potential causes of harm or injury. The sample Risk Assessment Form (Part 1 - Appendix 7) should be used to show that a proper check has been made taking account of the participants. If you are visiting commercial organisations, they will have their own Risk Assessment which may also be obtained from their website. If the visit is taking place under the auspices of a national organisation it should provide you with a copy of its own Risk Assessment policy.

Fire Safety

A fire safety check also needs to be carried out when away from the usual meeting place. Familiarise yourself with the fire drill which exists at the new venue; be aware of the location of fire exits and assembly points outside the building. You should also make sure that fire exits are kept clear and that they will open in an emergency.

Detailed Planning

1.Insurance

All commercial providers should have their own Public Liability Insurance cover. It is always advisable to contact your insurance brokers to check that the cover you have is suitable for the trip/visit you have planned.

2.Transport

Most trips will require the hiring of a minibus or coach depending on numbers taking part. Your initial enquiries should cover cost, availability and whether the vehicle is fitted with seatbelts, first aid kit and has fire extinguishers on board. Several agencies hire out minibuses to groups and the costs are very competitive. You will need to check what insurance you may need and the main driver will need to hold a Minibus Driver's Permit/PCV licence. It should be noted that volunteer minibus drivers who passed their car driving test after 1st January 2007 are restricted to drive minibuses which weigh no more than 3500kgs gross vehicle weight.

Obviously, there will be some restrictions with regard to driving these vehicles. Many companies will require the driver to:

- Be over 25 years old
- Hold a current full driver's licence

- Have at least 2 years' driving experience
- Undertake a short assessment
- Hold a PCV licence

Restrictions can vary between companies and you should make enquiries at the time of booking. When transporting young people, it is essential that a second adult accompanies the driver and, depending on the circumstances, it may be that the second adult should also hold a Minibus Driver's Permit. For residential events there must be at least two adults within the party who hold mini bus permits.

3.First Aid

Your First Aid Kit should be accessible and stocked (See Appendix 2:10) For non-local or residential visits, the adult responsible for first aid should have a current first aid certificate and contact information for the nearest doctor, hospital and emergency services should this be required.

The following are the main tasks for the person nominated as responsible for first aid:

- To arrange the place, time and procedure for routine medical attention
- To keep a log of injuries and illnesses occurring during the visit and the treatment administered (See Appendix 14 in Part 1)
- To ensure that parents are informed of any treatment administered during the visit. This may require discussion with the group leader and, in the case of more serious issues, informing parents immediately rather than waiting until the group returns home
- Where medical treatment has been administered by a qualified person the parents receive a written record together with relevant notes, X-rays, prescriptions etc.
- On return, transfer to the club's own files all details which need to be recorded, even though the staff at the centre at which the group stayed have themselves reported the incident
- Where there is serious illness/incident/injury, in conjunction with the group leader, prepare a report with a witness statement where possible, about the events leading up to the incident and the action taken. These notes should be kept with the accident/incident records.

4.Home Contact

This should be a responsible adult who is able to be contacted at any time during the visit and who is, preferably, not related to any member of the group. The Home Contact will be responsible for implementing that part of the emergency procedure to be applied at local level and hold the following information:

- Full details of the visit including location, travel plans, duration, activities
- Names of all participants with next of kin and emergency contact numbers for each

5.Incidents

In the event of an incident, the following procedures should apply:

- Ensure that the incident is dealt with and recorded appropriately
- Ensure that young people do not use their mobile phones until after the Home Contact has been informed and permission is given by the leader
- The Home Contact is informed of the incident and any further action to be taken.
- Home Contact to contact parents to report action already taken or to be taken
- Home Contact to contact the Chairman of the Management Committee

6. Emergencies

It is recommended that an emergency procedure be considered at the planning stage for any event, particularly those involving a residential or adventurous activities. In situations involving severe injury, possible criminal offences or media interest, the group leader should:

- Keep calm
- Ensure the safety of other members of the party including staff
- Listen as impartially as possible to all parties involved
- Avoid admitting liability or expressing personal opinions
- Compile a detailed report about the accident/incident and subsequent developments
- Ensure the Home Contact is informed about what has happened, who is involved and what action has been taken/will be taken

The organiser of a large event, as well as any commercial provider involved, will be fully aware of the emergency procedure and will help accordingly.

Residential visits involving hazardous activities

The following is a list of matters to be checked:

1.Licence

You must ensure that commercial providers have a licence to run adventurous activities. This should be shown on their publicity leaflets. Look for AALA – Adventure Activities Licensing Authority with accompanying kite mark or LOTC – Learning Outside the Classroom accreditation.

Accommodation

Prior to departure a detailed plan should be obtained showing:

- Your location on site
- Floor plan of accommodation (particularly the ground floor)
- Sole/joint occupancy
- Where adults are situated
- Sleeping arrangements
- Location of other groups in residence
- Whether or not the public has access to the site

2.Instructors' Qualifications

You should check that all instructors are fully qualified for the activities they are carrying out.

3.Insurance

See preceding paragraph (d)

Risk Assessment: You should ask the commercial provider for his written Risk Assessment Policy. If attending an event organised via a national organisation, you should ask to see its written policy.

Safeguarding Policy: The commercial provider should have its own Safeguarding Policy and have incorporated this within its recruitment process.

Final Checklist : Appendix 2:11 contains a sample final checklist covering everything which needs to be checked.

Post Event

After the event, a date should be set for an evaluation meeting to which parents/guardians will also be invited. This meeting should have three aims:

- To show the extent to which the aims of the visit were met
- To review the planning process
- To improve the planning and operation of future visits

The staff team should prepare their own assessment of the visit and contributions from the young people who participated are also desirable. By planning the meeting in this way, there should be time

Sleeping and Residential Activities

1. Behaviour

All leaders must maintain high standards of personal behaviour, and encourage them from young people in their care. All staff must avoid inappropriate physical contact with participants and other staff and must not engage in any behaviour which may endanger participants or staff directly or indirectly. The relationship between staff and young people must be conducted at a professional level at all times.

On arrival at a Residential Centre, it is normal to have a brief about hazards, places that are out of bounds and acceptable behaviour.

2. Smoking and Drinking

Guidance given at the Final Briefing about smoking and drinking should be kept to. It is usually easier to enforce this sort of guidance if adult leaders are seen to be subject to the same expectations as young people. Do not allow or condone illegal activities.

3. Sleeping Arrangements

Accommodation should allow leaders to provide the supervision expected of a "reasonable parent". Leaders are "in loco parentis". In residential centres this will usually equate with leaders being in dormitories adjoining those of young people.

Under NO circumstances should staff or volunteers: -

- to share rooms or dormitories with young people.
- share tents with participants.

4. Activity Tutors

When using tutors/instructors for some part of an off-site or Residential activity, it is essential that there is absolute clarity about which staff are responsible for which participants. The extent of that responsibility must also be agreed.

5. Catering

In most Residential Centres, participants are expected to take some part in catering or household duties (e.g. clearing tables, washing up). A written Rota that can be displayed will be easier to operate than a less formal approach, particularly with larger numbers of participants.

6. Shared Centres

In some Residential Centres there will be other groups sharing. It is important that boundaries are mutually agreed and that similar standards are expected of all groups.

This issue will normally be addressed by Centre staff since they have regular experience of differing groups in residence. The opportunity to mix with other groups can, however, be a powerful contribution to a young person's social education.

7. Swimming in lakes, rivers, Streams, Sea and open water

Young People are not allowed to swim in any lakes, rivers, Streams, Sea and open water unless it is organised as part of a controlled event and under the supervision of qualified life guards under third party insurance. ALL participants MUST be able to swim at least 100 meters.

7.1. Indoor/Outdoor Swimming pools

This must be at an organised and recognised venue with suitable qualified lifeguards supervising. Workers need to ensure that all young people taking part in swimming and water sports are able to swim at least 50 meters which is the length of a swimming pool. Non swimmers would not normally be encouraged to participate as this presents further risks. It is however acceptable for non-swimmers to participate in swimming where: -

- Centre/Venue has special arrangements for non-swimmers
- As part of an organised swimming lessons
- Under the supervision of a qualified swimming instructor
- The venue comes under the category of a Water Park such as: -
 - Wet n Wild Water Park,
 - Waterworld 2000 Water Park,
 - Alpamare Water Park

A separate risk assessment would be required specifically addressing the risks.

7.2 Workers and Volunteers swimming

This presents a large risk to workers and volunteers due to the potential risks around allegations of inappropriate behaviour or physical contact. For this reason it is vital that workers and volunteers do not put themselves in any position that can be open to either misinterpretation or allegations. Workers may under certain situations participate in with young people where the risk can be removed and managed. As part of this workers and volunteers MUST ensure that there are: -

- The venue is completely open.

