

Transporting Children and Activities



SCOPE OF THIS CHAPTER

The term 'Activity' means any activity undertaken with a child away from the normal place of work of the staff/carer. This includes the transporting of children to court or other appointments, taking children to and from school, on trips, home or educational visits, holidays, days out or outdoor activities – within the UK and abroad.

The procedure is designed to apply to group activities but the principles apply to the undertaking of activities with one child.

Where a series or range of activities are necessary (the transporting of children to and from school, a series of supervised contacts or routine activities), the arrangements should be agreed with the manager in advance, and a date set for the review of the arrangements.

See the following Chapters:

Day Trips and Holidays Within and Outside the UK Procedure

School Trips within the UK Procedure

AMENDMENT

This chapter was updated in September 2017. Rules changed in February 2017 around booster seats and babies who now need to stay in rear facing seats until 15 months. (There has been a change to the technical standards of booster seats and cushions for manufacturers from 9 February but this does not affect existing models of booster seats and cushions). for more information see [Child car seats: the law, Using a child car seat or booster seat](#).

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1. Pre-Activity Planning and Authorisation

The term 'Activity' is defined in 'Scope of this chapter' above.

1. As soon as it is known an activity or series of activities are likely or necessary, the manager must be consulted and should oversee and approve all arrangements or delegate another person to act on the manager's behalf. All arrangements must be recorded and signed off by the manager or person delegated;
2. Where a series or range of activities are necessary (the transporting of children to and from school, a series of supervised contacts or the undertaking of routine activities), the arrangements should be agreed with the manager in advance, and a date set for the review of the arrangements;
3. If only one member of staff/carer is taking part, it is always assumed that person is in charge or responsible for the activity. Where more than one staff/carer is taking part, one person must be designated Group Leader (or person in charge) and other staff/carers should be given other responsibilities/roles as necessary. These other responsibilities must be overseen by the Group Leader and approved by the manager;
4. The Group Leader must prepare and produce a route, timetable or schedule for the activity, including dates, times of travel, vehicle(s) to be used, the location of planned breaks, places/locations to be visited and people to be visited;
5. The Group Leader must identify the children who will be taking part in the activity and consider what arrangements or plans must be made, taking account of:
 - a. Any **specific plan relating to the child** Children's **Service Plans**;
 - b. Recent/relevant events/incidents;
 - c. Group dynamics, staff/child relationships;
 - d. Child Protection Issues;
 - e. Violent or other offending behaviour;
 - f. The healthcare or mental health needs of the children;
 - g. Level associated with Drug/Alcohol etc. misuse;

- h. Level of disability and associated special needs.
6. A list of staff or other responsible adults who are likely to take part must be drawn up. At least one member of staff should be known to the child(ren) taking part and there must be one member of staff from each gender for mixed groups. Where this is not possible the manager must approve the alternative arrangements, ensuring that the best interests of the child are accounted for; in these circumstances the staff/adults taking responsibility for the child must be provided with relevant information about the child to enable the activity to be undertaken safely;
 7. The Group Leader must ensure the child/staff ratio's are adequate to meet the needs of the children and the risks posed. For example, where there is a risk of violence, hazardous activities are undertaken or remote locations are used;
 8. Where there is a risk of confrontational or violent behaviour, the Group Leader/Manager must ensure that staff/carers undertaking the activity are suitably trained and are familiar with relevant procedures and guidelines contained in this manual relating to Behaviour Management, Incidents and the use of Physical Intervention;
 9. The Group Leader must ensure that parent(s) have been consulted/informed and consents obtained from them;
 10. All staff/carers must carry ID cards.

2. Insurance

The Group Leader must ensure that adequate insurance arrangements are in place.

When arranging overnight activities a copy of the accommodation centre insurance will be required.

With regard to off-site activities, places such as open spaces may not have insurance therefore careful consideration must be given before participating in the activity.

All Local Authority establishments and amenities are adequately insured.

3. Financial Arrangements and Meals

The Group Leader must decide what financial arrangements are necessary, and agree them with the manager. The manager must decide how finances will be recorded.

The Group Leader must ensure that adequate arrangements are made for meals, breaks; taking account of the dietary, healthcare and cultural needs/choices of the children, staff and carers.

4. Transport Arrangements - General

Also see **Section 5, Transporting Children.**

Where two or more drivers take part, they must share the driving equally.

The following must be taken into account:

- a. Passenger safety;
- b. Competence of the driver;
- c. Awareness of driver's hours;
- d. Traffic conditions;
- e. Contingency funds and arrangements in case of breakdown/emergency;
- f. Weather;
- g. Journey time and distance;
- h. Stopping off points for long journeys and toilet breaks - 20 minutes every 2 hour;
- i. Unless otherwise agreed by the manager, children and non-driving staff/carers may not sit in the front of vehicles;
- j. Unless otherwise agreed by the manager, the driver must not be responsible for the supervision of the children in the vehicle;
- k. Appropriate seat belts or restraints must be used and fastened (see end of this section, below, for requirements);
- l. The transport must have a first aid kit;
- m. A mobile telephone should be taken/carried by the Group Leader and each member of staff likely to be separated from the Group Leader. If mobile 'phones are not carried suitable arrangements should be made to enable communication between staff undertaking the activity.

A First Aid Kit and Fire Extinguisher must always be carried on the vehicle. Where outdoor activities are planned, suitable First Aid Kits should be carried away from the vehicle.

Before setting out the Group Leader must ensure that suitable mechanical checks are undertaken in relation to the vehicle.

SEAT BELTS/RESTRAINTS

Child Car Seats: The Law - Rules changed in February 2017 around booster seats and babies who now need to stay in rear facing seats until 15 months. (There has been a change to the technical standards of booster seats and cushions for manufacturers from 9 February but this does not affect existing models of booster seats and cushions). for more information see [Child car seats: the law, Using a child car seat or booster seat.](#)

Only seat belts/restraints fitted by the manufacturer of the vehicle may be used or those supplied by the authority.

Where such equipment is provided for staff/carers, an inventory must be kept by the manager of the purchase/maintenance dates. Annual inspections must be undertaken, by a suitably qualified person.

5. Transporting Children

Also see **Section 4, Transport Arrangements – General.**

1. Unless otherwise agreed by the manager, a member of staff/carer must accompany children in the rear of the vehicle. Where children are allowed to sit in the front of vehicle, they must be over the age of 12;
2. Children may not hold or be responsible for vehicle keys and may not steer cars or use petrol pumps;
3. All vehicle occupants must wear suitable seat belts or restraints at all times when in vehicles;
4. In foster or adopter vehicles there is now a restriction on smoking in private vehicles where a person under the age of 18 is present in the vehicle;
5. Children must not tamper with or use any controls except, at the discretion of the driver, the radio/stereo;
6. If it is assessed that a child may be distressed whilst in the vehicle or a child becomes distressed to the extent that the safety of the vehicle or occupants may be compromised, the vehicle must be stopped; preferably in a layby or suitable stopping place. However, the vehicle may have to be stopped at the side of the road or on the hard shoulder of a motorway. In these circumstances, the hazard warning lights should be activated, the occupants should get out of the vehicle and stand well away from the road, and the emergency services must be summoned;
7. If the safety of the occupants is compromised, with the risk of Injury or Damage to Property, Physical Intervention may be used or the Police should be called to assist. See **Physical Intervention Procedure** and **Contacting the Police Procedure**;
8. If the situation demands that a child with a history of violence must be transported, the Group Leader must ensure the following:
 - a. The child must sit in the rear of the vehicle, supervised by a minimum of two staff/carers;
 - b. Staff/carers must be instructed to hold or, if there is a risk to life or limb, Restrain the child;
 - c. The child must not sit behind, or be able to distract the driver;
 - d. The Group Leader must be satisfied that no items, which could be used as weapons, are available to the child. These could include tools, aerosols, pens etc;
 - e. It may be necessary to search the child before the activity starts; see **Searching Children and their Possessions Procedure**;

- f. Care should be taken when getting in and out of vehicles. This is the time when holds are weakened;
- g. Some thought should be given to action on arrival at destination - will more staff be needed? Is a room available? Is it easy to get the car close to the destination, and is it possible to avoid other children becoming involved?
- h. If the potential risks cannot be managed safely, the activity must not go ahead; or must cease and, if necessary, the Police be called to assist.

6. Risk Assessment

It is not necessary to undertake a separate Risk Assessment for each activity/trip. Where a range or series of activities may be undertaken (the transporting of children to and from school, a series of supervised contacts, the undertaking of routine activities), the Manager may approve a Risk Assessment and associated arrangements such as staffing levels for a period; and then set a date for the review of the assessment/arrangements.

1. The Manager or person delegated to oversee the activity must approve a completed a risk assessment in advance;
2. A risk assessment for a visit need not be complex but it should be comprehensive. It does not generally require technical formulae or professional health and safety expertise, but specialised information for some visits may be necessary and Managers must ensure that the person assessing is competent to do so;
3. A formal assessment of the risks that might be met on an activity should have the aim of preventing the risks or reducing them. Children must not be placed in situations which expose them to an unacceptable level of risk;
4. Safety and protection of all concerned must always be the prime consideration. If the risks cannot be contained or managed, the activity must not take place;
5. The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations as well as those described in **Section 1, Pre-Activity Planning**, above.
 - a. What are the hazards?
 - b. Whom might they affect?
 - c. What safety measures need to be in place to reduce the risk to an acceptable level?
 - d. Can the designated Group Leader put the safety measures in place?
 - e. What steps will be taken in an emergency?

6. In undertaking the risk assessment, the Group Leader must consult all other staff taking part and children who are capable of making informed decisions, record the risk assessment, arrange for it to be seen and signed off by the manager and then provide copies for all staff/carers taking part. One copy must be left with the manager;
7. Frequent activities/visits to local venues such as swimming baths or where a child is transported to and from school may not need a risk assessment for each trip; but the manager must ensure that a risk assessment is completed for the series/range of activities/visits; and a date set for the review of the risk assessment;
8. Alternatively, a risk assessment which has been agreed for a series or range of activities/visits must be reviewed immediately after any information comes to light or any event/incident which compromises the safety of the children/staff/carers. In such circumstances, the activities/visits must be suspended until a review has taken place and the manager is satisfied that a suitable new risk assessment has been completed;
9. The Group Leader should take the following factors into consideration when assessing the risks;
 - a. The type of visit/activity and the level at which it is being undertaken;
 - b. The location, routes and modes of transport;
 - c. The competence, experience and qualifications of the staff and staff to child ratios;
 - d. The group members' age competence, fitness, and temperament, and the suitability of the activity;
 - e. The healthcare needs of the children;
 - f. The quality and suitability of available equipment;
 - g. Seasonal conditions, weather and timing;
 - h. Emergency procedures and the need to monitor risks throughout the activity;
 - i. The children's backgrounds. i.e. offending, health, absconding, child protection, drugs.
10. When approving the Risk Assessment and subsequent plan for the activity, the Manager should determine what latitude the Group Leader has to change the plan, the need for a contingency plan, an 'on call' or backup procedure to provide support, advice or direction to the Group Leader once the activity has started.

7. Prepare the Children

As soon as practicable before the activity is due to start, the children should be notified of the following; and this must be recorded.

- a. The intention to involve the children in the planning;
- b. An explanation of the proposed activity, including its aims and objectives;
- c. Expectations about their behaviour and the implications of poor behaviour;
- d. Appropriate and inappropriate personal contact including sexual activity;
- e. Emergency procedures and safety precautions;
- f. Rendezvous procedures;
- g. Dangers e.g. coastal visits, mountain walking;
- h. What clothing they will require.

8. Adventure Activities

June 2009: The whole of this section is new.

If an activity holiday is proposed, the name, address and phone number of the organisation, activities involved and type of accommodation should be obtained.

There are a number of checks which must be made on activity holidays.

These **must** be undertaken by the social worker/Group Leader unless the holiday has been arranged by the child's school the school, in which case, the social worker/Group leader should be asked to confirm that these checks have been made and that sufficient staff or subcontracted staff will be present to supervise the children.

8.1 Organisations Registered With the Adventure Activity Licensing Authority

The Social Worker/Group Leader should confirm that the organisation is licensed with the Adventure Activity Licensing Authority. The licence registers the organisation for sports in 4 categories (caving, trekking, mountaineering, water sports) and the conditions in which it is licensed to provide them. The Social Worker/Group Leader should look for:

- Licence number. This will be a double number e.g. L1234/R5678;
- You should verify the licence by ringing the [Adventure Activities Licensing Authority \(Health and Safety Executive website\)](#);
- What sports and conditions it is licensed for.

The licence is an indication of the standard of health and safety the organisation achieves. It also indicates that police checks and references have been taken up for staff.

8.2 Organisations not Registered With the Adventure Activity Licensing Authority

Some activities, which contain an element of risk, fall below or outside of the licensing level and requirements. For organisations not licensed with the Adventure Activity Licensing Authority, the following checks should be carried out:

Ask for the following:

- A list of staff and their qualifications for the activities offered;
- Whether all staff and volunteers are police/Disclosure and Barring Service checked;
- Whether references are taken up on all staff and volunteers;
- Whether the organisation undertakes formal risk assessments on the activities; ask to be sent copy/copies of the risk assessment(s). These should identify risks as well as measures and procedures by which the risks are controlled.

9. Accommodation

9.1 Accommodation (Indoors)

- a. The immediate accommodation area should be exclusively for the group's use;
- b. There should be heating and appropriate ventilation;
- c. The accommodation must be safe i.e. locks on doors;
- d. The accommodation must have a fire alarm;
- e. The whole group must be made aware of the layout of the accommodation;
- f. There must be adequate space for storing clothing;
- g. There must be adequate lighting (take a torch);
- h. There should be recreational accommodation/facilities wherever possible.

9.2 Accommodation (Outdoors)

The above should be taken into consideration. For camping, there are numerous additional considerations to be taken into account, e.g. safety issues, security, cooking safety, fire. All concerns should be part of the risk assessment.

10. Sleeping Arrangements

1. Wherever possible, there should be separate male and female sleeping/bathroom facilities for children and staff. If this is not possible, a rota system must be implemented;
2. Wherever possible, staff should supervise the children at night (and remain in gender specific rooms);
3. A rota should be devised to enable the maximum supervision possible. The on call person should not retire until the children have been settled for one hour;
4. Individual/group needs must be taken into consideration at night e.g. a child may prefer not to sleep in a dormitory setting. Are there any child protection issues? Sleeping arrangements must reflect the fact that staff have considered the individual needs of and associated risks to children on the activity. Sleeping arrangements must be detailed in the plan and approved by the Centre Manager;
5. Security arrangements must be implemented at night. Wherever possible, a child should be prevented from absconding.

11. Absence Whilst on an Activity

If a child becomes Absent (is missing, absconded or absent without authority), it will be necessary to follow the procedures set out in [Protocol for Children and Young People Missing from Home and Care](#) (West Midlands Safeguarding Children Procedures).