

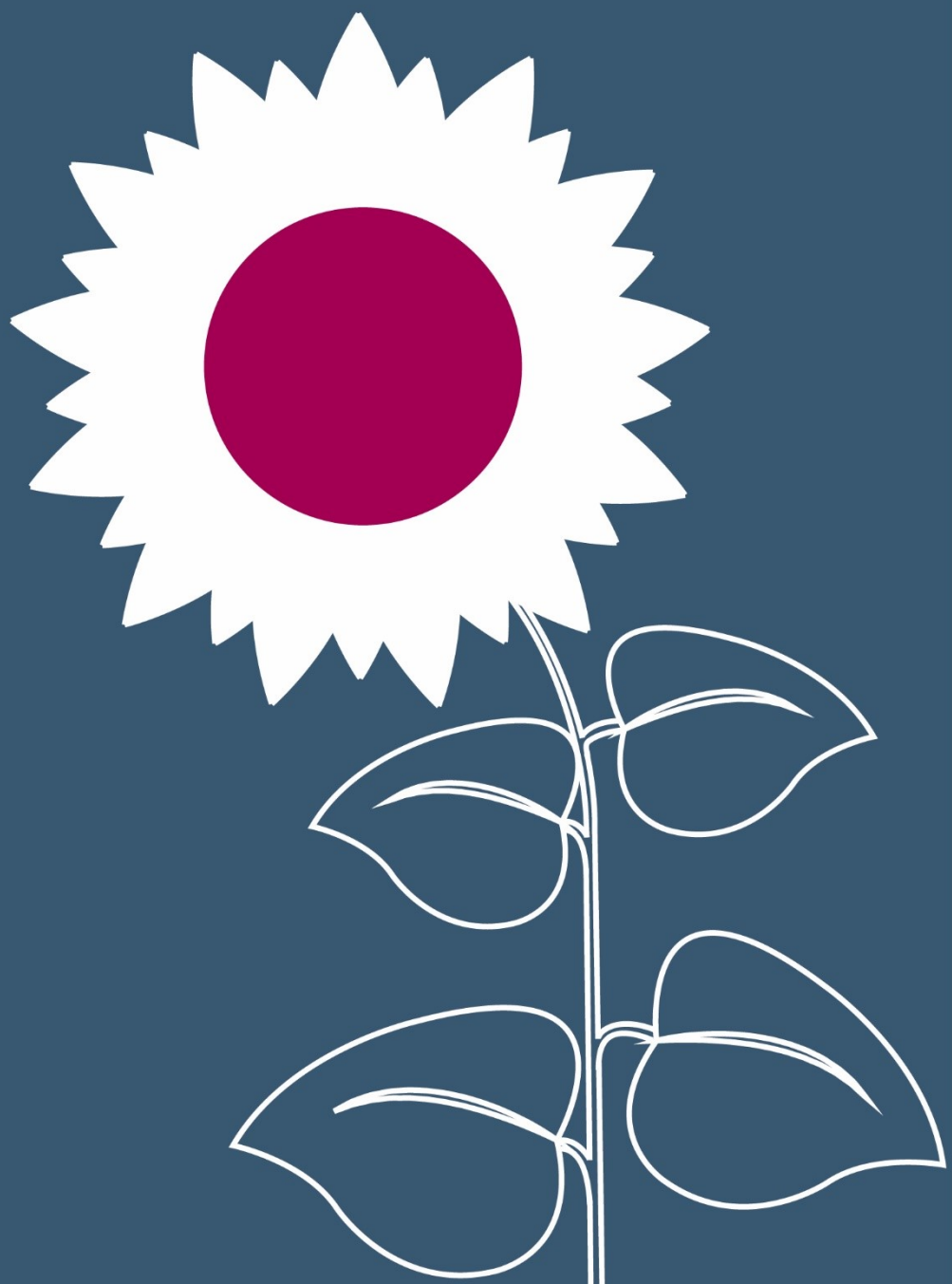


City of
Stoke-on-Trent

Holidays & School Trips In and Outside the UK

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Review September 2024



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1. Holidays for Looked After Children in the UK

Where there is a proposal for a Looked After Child (either s.20 Children Act 1989 or subject to a Care Order) who is to go on holiday in the UK, the child's social worker must obtain full information about the holiday.

This will include:

- Proposed dates and duration of the holiday;
- The wishes and feelings of the child;
- Address(es)/contact details of the holiday location/what type of holiday;
- Insurance details;
- Who will be present on the holiday e.g. names of other children and other adults;
- If the holiday involves staying with friends or relatives, their names and addresses;
- Emergency contacts;
- Any risk assessments that may be required, which should include any health or behaviour issues of the child as well as the holiday environment itself.

The child's social worker should seek the views of the child and parent/persons who have Parental Responsibility as soon as practicable.

If the parents' consent, this consent must be obtained in writing.

Where the social worker, parent and staff/carer agree to the proposed holiday, the holiday can be approved and should be included in the child's Placement Plan which should be reviewed annually.

For children who are in a long-term placement and there is agreement with the Children's Services that the carers have Delegated Authority, (depending upon the nature of the delegation agreed, it may be the case that the carers are able to make decisions relating to holidays themselves. This should also be discussed and agreed with the IRO through the review and care planning. However, good practice should ensure that decisions by the carers are shared in a timely way with their Supervising Social Worker and / or child's allocated practitioner. The parent/s should be advised as appropriate – especially if the holiday affects family time arrangements.

Children must not be taken on holiday during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The DCS will consider a request agreed by the Head of the child's school, via the social work manager – in documented exceptional circumstances.

Written confirmation of the DCS's decision, together with the reasons, should be provided to the parent. [Standard letter template at Appendix 1.](#)

Where the holiday will involve additional costs, the social worker should obtain approval for the costs from the relevant manager before the holiday can be agreed.

If approved, the holiday should be included in the child's Care Plan.

Where the holiday will interrupt contact arrangements between the child and parents, consideration should also be given to arranging additional contacts before and after the holiday.

2. Holidays for Looked After Children Outside the UK

2.1 Holidays for children accommodated under s20

Arrangements for notifying and consulting the social worker about holiday plans should be agreed in the Care Plan.

The consent of the parent(s) or person with Parental Responsibility must be obtained and consent form signed.

The child's social worker must obtain full information about the holiday/trip. This will include. [Standard template included as Appendix 2:](#)

- Proposed dates and duration of the holiday;
- The wishes and feelings of the child;
- Address(es)/contact details of the holiday location/what type of holiday;
- Insurance details;
- Who will be present on the holiday e.g. names of other children and other adults;
- If the holiday involves staying with friends or relatives, their names and addresses;
- Emergency contacts;
- Any risk assessments that may be required, which should include any health or behaviour issues of the child as well as the holiday environment itself.

NOTE: If there are any issues such as the holiday destination experiencing political unrest, concern that the child may not return as planned or other circumstances which may place the child at risk, these should be highlighted to the social worker's Manager. A check should be undertaken through [Foreign Office - Foreign Travel Advice](#) and a balanced decision regarding the outcome made.

If it is a group holiday, the social worker must be satisfied that adequate health and safety precautions including appropriate risk assessments are taken and in place. Police checks related to extended family to be considered/undertaken.

Children must not be taken on holiday during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances; such a request must be approved by the DCS.

2.2 Holidays for Children on Care Orders

Holidays of less than one month

The procedure is the same as for those for Accommodated Children (see **Section 2.1, Holidays for children accommodated s20**) except that the consent of the parents or person having Parental Responsibility is not required but should be sought and obtained wherever practicable or possible.

Any objections by the parent(s) should be recorded on the child's electronic records. In respect of ICO and full Care Orders the Local Authority shares PR with parents therefore legal advice should be sought.

The social worker should ensure that arrangements are in place through the Care Plan to be notified well in advance of any plans for holidays abroad in order to obtain required consent wherever practicable or possible.

Holidays of one month or more

This requires either the written consent of every person who has parental responsibility for the child, or the permission of the court.

Where a Court Order is required, the social worker should contact Legal Services as soon as possible for the necessary application to be made and advise the parents of the intended application.

It is usual for the court to require evidence of the views of those with Parental Responsibility or the efforts made to obtain them.

If the holiday is authorised by the Court, the holiday should be included in the Placement Plan and a copy of the court order giving leave for the holiday should also be given to the foster carer.

2.3 Insurance Cover

Healthcare for UK Nationals in the EU, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway or Switzerland

The UK Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) provides access to state healthcare in Europe at a reduced cost, or sometimes for free.

- If the child already has a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) this remains valid until the expiry date on the card;
- If the child does not have a European Health Insurance Card or it has expired, they will need a Global Health Insurance Card. Cards can be ordered online from the NHS (see the **NHS.UK website**). For children under 16, the application should be completed by their carers;
- The GHIC and EHIC do not replace travel insurance which should be in place for all holidays outside the UK. For the latest advice on the GHIC, see the **GOV.UK website**.

Travel Insurance Cover for Holidays

Carers should obtain travel insurance for all holidays overseas, this will cover a range of eventualities, including medical expenses, a trip being cut short or cancelled, and loss or theft of possessions. For more advice on travel insurance, see the **GOV.UK website**.

2.4 Obtaining a Passport

- The Home Office has issued **Guidance for Local Authorities Children's Services Departments when Applying for Passports on Behalf of Children**;
- Children's Services Departments are normally only entitled to apply for passports for a Looked After Child when they have parental responsibility;

- Where Children's Services do not hold parental responsibility, the application cannot be processed without the consent of at least one person who has parental responsibility for the child.

3. School/Organisational Trips of up to four days away

The social worker should ensure risk assessments have been conducted.

The child's participation in school/organisational trips should be considered at the time of the placement, and the consultation required before they can be agreed should be included in the Placement Plan.

Where a child is placed with the parents, the Placement Plan will usually provide that a school trip of up to four days can be agreed by the social worker in consultation with the school and the parent.

Where a child is placed in foster care or residential care, the Placement Plan will usually authorise the staff/carer to agree to the child going on school or other organisational trips of up to four days away without prior consultation with the social worker or the parent. If the staff/carer have not been so authorised, the child's social worker and parents must be consulted before agreement can be given.

Where parental consent is not given, the social worker should consult their Manager and obtain legal advice as necessary. Where the Manager agrees to the child going on the trip despite parental opposition, the reasons must be recorded and explained to the parent.

Appendix 1 – Standard decision Letter template

our reference
Our reference
Date

6 February 2023



City of
Stoke-on-Trent

**PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

**Early Intervention and Children's
Social Care | Children and Family
Services**

Civic Centre Floor 2
Glebe Street
Stoke on Trent
ST4 1HH

Dear parents/carers (**Insert names**)

(Child's name here)

In relation to the written request for unauthorised absence from school for Child(ren) (**insert name**), **the following decision has been made:**

Agreed

Not Agreed

If not agreed, please see the reason below.

For further information please contact the social worker [insert name] on telephone number [insert telephone number].

The local authority and the carers will comply with current COVID 19 regulations regarding travel.

Yours sincerely

Vonni Gordon
Assistant Director of Children and Family Services

Tell us if you need this letter in an alternative format

Get in touch

Telephone: 01782 234 234 stoke.gov.uk



Appendix 2 – Standard Letter full details

our reference
Our reference
Date

6 February 2023



City of Stoke-on-Trent

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

**Early Intervention and Children's
Social Care | Children and Family
Services**

Civic Centre Floor 2
Glebe Street
Stoke on Trent
ST4 1HH

Dear Sir/Madam

(Child's name here)

The above child(ren)/young person are looked after (under s.31 the Children Act 1989 – Interim/Full Care Order) by Stoke-on-Trent Children and Family Services.

Stoke-on-Trent Children and Family Service gives permission for foster carers xxxx and xxx xxxxxxxx to take the above-named children on a holiday abroad / UK to xxxxxxxx (insert destination).

Child/young person's view about going on holiday.....

Who will be present on the holiday (insert names of other children and adults)

Type of holiday:

Overseas

During the xx days of the holiday, they will be residing at..... (Accommodation here)

Dates from	to	destination	Method of travel *	Insurance details

*Please provide the relevant flight / ferry details below

Details of travel:

Flight / Boat Number	Time outbound	Time Inbound	Name of Airport / Port

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Type of holiday:

UK

During the xx days of the holiday, they will be residing at..... (Accommodation here)

Dates from	to	destination	Method of travel *	Insurance details

*Please provide the relevant method of travel (i.e. car / train / coach)

Details of travel:

Method of travel	Time leaving	Time arrival

EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME/TELEPHONE NUMBER/ADDRESS

.....

HEALTH/BEHAVIOUR/CONSIDERATIONS (please provide evidence/details of risk assessment environment)

.....

Any absence from the United Kingdom will not exceed 28 days and the authority will comply with the Children Act 1989. Permission to travel has been provided by parents and social worker.

The Local Authority and the carers will comply with current COVID 19 regulations regarding travel.

Yours faithfully

Vonni Gordon
Assistant Director of Children and Family Services

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