

SAFEGUARDING GUIDANCE FOR OFF-SITE, OVERNIGHT OR OTHER ONE-OFF ACTIVITIES

Holidays and Residential trips

Permission for the holiday or trip, and insurance

A detailed description of the holiday or trip must be presented to the Parochial Church Council so that permission may be given by the PCC, and the holiday covered by the parish insurance. If there are to be any potentially hazardous activities undertaken this description must include an assessment of the risks involved, with adequate insurance; or alternatively, a written assurance from the activity centre that it has carried out its own risk assessment and has adequate insurance.

Recruitment of leaders to take children and young people away

-  Any trip must have a group leader. The group leader will have overall responsibility for supervision of the visit whilst also paying great attention to health and safety guidelines
-  All leaders must be recruited according to the safer recruitment procedure
-  Occasional helpers who have not been safely recruited can be used on day trips but must work under the direct supervision of a named leader. Helpers cannot work on trips involving overnight stays
-  All leaders must be clear about their specific responsibilities. The group leader should hold a face to face briefing session for leaders before the trip begins. It may also be appropriate to hold such a session for parents
-  All leaders must know who to go to if they have a concern about a child or have any other worries

Staffing ratios for offsite activities

The Department for Education suggests the following:

- 1:15** for all visits where the element of risk is similar to the risks encountered in daily life;
- 1:10** for all trips abroad;
- 1:6** for children under eight and/or where the children have special needs
- 1:5** or fewer for high risk activities.

There must always be a minimum of two leaders from the church.

Communication

-  All leaders must carry a mobile phone, and have the phone numbers of other leaders saved on their phone
-  All leaders must carry a list of details of all children, including emergency contact details for parents at all times
-  A copy of this list must be held by a designated person at home, who will act as the intermediary in the event of emergency between the group and the church, and with parents
-  Leaders must report all serious incidents to the designated person at home, who will in turn pass on appropriate information. Written records must be made as soon as possible after the incident and submitted

Premises

-  Insurance, Food and Hygiene, First Aid kit and Fire precautions must be checked in advance of the event; written confirmation must be obtained, before the trip, of Employers and Public Liability insurances held by the operators of the premises
-  There must be a qualified first-aider on site

Risk assessment

-  If the residential trip is to a recognized, established venue, leaders must check in advance that the organization has carried out a risk assessment for the premises and the activities which will be undertaken, and is itself carrying the risk. Use the *risk assessment* form

- ✦ A risk assessment identifying risks in relation to specific needs of service users and actual risks for the holiday must be carried out by the church, and evaluated in advance of the holiday, and action taken to minimize these risks
- ✦ On arrival, leaders must carry out a further risk assessment of the accommodation to ensure the environment is safe for all parties present. If on arrival it is found that the situation is not as expected the leaders should not let the activities take place.
- ✦ Staff must familiarize themselves with the Fire Exits and appliances where they are staying and ensure that they are working. Any health and safety hazards should be reported and dealt with immediately

Transport for holidays and trips

See general guidance on Transport.

Parental consents for holidays and residential trips

No child under the age of 8 can be taken away on residential activities without his or her parent or guardian.

Each child or young person under the age of 18 (unless they are over 16 and living away from home or married) must have the written consent of parent or guardian, which gives authority to the person named as responsible for the activity to take the young person away and to act “as a careful parent would”.

The model *parental consent* form can be customized to suit local needs. It should include, as necessary:

- 📄 details of any child/young person’s special needs or medical requirements
- 📄 explicit consent to taking photographs or making videos
- 📄 consent to the child/young person smoking, if they are known to smoke, on holidays & residential trips

Information to parents

It is important that parents have full information before giving consent. This must include as a minimum:

- 📄 aims and objectives of the trip and activities
- 📄 date of the trip and its duration
- 📄 details of venue including arrangements for accommodation and supervision
- 📄 travel arrangements
- 📄 name of group leader and contact numbers
- 📄 information about financial, medical and insurance arrangements

Accommodation

For all residential or overnight trips & events:

- 👉 Boys and girls must have separate sleeping and washing facilities which are private to them
- 👉 Mixed groups of young people must have adults of both genders involved
- 👉 Adults should have separate accommodation but in close proximity to the young people
- 👉 Young people under the age of 18 must not be left alone overnight
- 👉 There should be a rota of adults awake during the night at least until all the young people have settled down

Any other arrangements e.g. Sleepovers, Lock-ins, All-night events must be carefully explained to parents beforehand and their consent sought to the arrangements.

Supervision

- 👉 Ratios of helpers to young people should be strictly followed
- 👉 Every group must be led by at least two adults, however small the group

- ↳ When physical activities are planned, staffing levels should be increased accordingly
- ↳ Individual adults must never be alone with children or young people
- ↳ Children will be told to act responsibly whilst not taking any unnecessary risks and must also follow the instructions of any adults in a supervisory position
- ↳ An agreement should be reached between the organiser and parents/carers as to how much independence is appropriate for older children and teenagers, but the leadership should be clear that they will make decisions on site in any given situation
- ↳ If a child is seen to cause any potential risk to themselves or others they must be withdrawn from the trip
- ↳ For trips to established premises, clarification of responsibility for leadership and supervision of children between the organization and the church leaders should be clearly established. Normally the organization's staff lead the activity but the church leaders remain responsible for the welfare of the children
- ↳ Leaders must not consume alcohol on the trip, even when off duty
- ↳ Parents must be informed beforehand if it is intended to allow groups of young people to go off unsupervised, e.g. for shopping

Sleepovers on church premises

Churches sometimes arrange sleepovers for children, or church premises may be used, for example, during pilgrimages or missions. The guidance for holidays and residential trips should be followed as far as possible.

- ☞ When part of the activity is for young people to remain together as a group, separate sleeping areas must be organized for girls and boys
- ☞ If possible separate washing and toileting should be provided, or different times for washing arranged, to ensure privacy
- ☞ The required ratio of adult leaders should be followed, including a gender balance
- ☞ Young people under the age of 18 must not be left alone overnight
- ☞ Ensure a rota of awake adults during the night or at least until all the youngsters have settled down

Risks of fire when on church premises:

Great care must be taken to ensure the safety of the young people from the risk of fire:

- ☞ There should be two separate routes out from the sleeping accommodation
- ☞ It must be possible to open all external doors. They should not be locked
- ☞ All exit routes should be clearly marked
- ☞ All internal doors should be kept closed at night to prevent the spread of smoke or fire
- ☞ Portable fires should be placed in safe positions and turned off at night
- ☞ All adults should have access to a torch and a telephone
- ☞ There should be no smoking anywhere on the premises
- ☞ A list of those present should be hung up near the main exit door. Everyone should know where outside to assemble and a roll call completed
- ☞ Anyone discovering a fire should raise the alarm by shouting FIRE
- ☞ The fire service should be called to all fires. Use the 999 facility
- ☞ Make sure that cars do not block the exits or access for emergency vehicles
- ☞ Adults should know where to locate fire fighting equipment and how it is operated
- ☞ This equipment should only be used if safe to do so

Safeguarding children and young people is everyone's responsibility and basic common sense has a significant part to play. The safety, welfare and meaningful experience of the participants must always be at the forefront in any decision taken beyond the scope of these guidelines. We are always happy to discuss any particular concerns about running a trip, event or activity.