



National
Guidance

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Guidance for Parents

The term parent(s) is used throughout National Guidance to refer to those parents, legal guardians or others who have parental responsibility for a visit participant.

Consent

Schools are not required to obtain parental consent for curriculum-related activities or visits that take place wholly in normal school hours, unless the child is of nursery-age. However, where these activities take place beyond the school gate, it is reasonable that schools should inform parents. This might, for example, be through a school prospectus, the school website or a policy document explaining which locations are regularly used. Or it may be a notification via, for example, a newsletter, general information letter, email or text.

For visits outside normal school hours, and for adventure activities, schools must obtain consent. Establishments such as youth services and voluntary organisations should obtain consent for all visits and activities. This consent may be sought either through a one-off blanket process covering most visits when a child is enrolled with the establishment, or through visit-specific consent requests, or through a combination of these.

When parents are asked to give consent for visits, they should be provided with information that will enable them to make an informed decision. This information should be in writing and, for more complex activities (such as residential visits, overseas visits, visits involving adventurous activities and visits where there will be remote supervision) it is good practice for parents to be invited to a pre-visit briefing where they can ask questions and ensure that they have a proper understanding of all aspects of the visit including:

- Dates of visit.
- Visit learning outcomes.
- Times of departure and return.
- The location where young people will be collected and returned.
- Mode(s) of transport and name of any travel company facilitating the visit.
- Size of the group.
- The name of the Visit Leader, staff supervision arrangements and whether any remote supervision will be taking place.
- Young people's responsibilities for their own health, safety and wellbeing, and the code of conduct.

- Accommodation details.
- Arrangements for dealing with young people who become ill.
- Arrangements for providing for special educational and medical needs, and disabilities.
- Full range of planned activities.
- Clothing and equipment requirements.
- Insurance arrangements.
- Pocket money recommendation.
- Costs and cancellation terms.
- Emergency contact details.
- Policy for the use of mobile phones and other electronic devices by the young people.

What you can expect

- To be given information about any pre-visit preparation where you need to take an active role. This includes ensuring that your child has a proper understanding of behavioural expectations as set out in any Code of Conduct (where appropriate). Both you and your child need to be clear about any sanctions.
- To be given clear information about the arrangements for sending your child home early (when there has been serious failure to meet the required standards of behaviour), or collecting your child before the end of a visit (when they have become ill) and how any costs will be met.
- To be asked to provide the Visit Leader with emergency contact numbers, where you, or an appropriate person, can be contacted 24/7 during the period of the visit.
- To be asked to provide information that the leaders may need for your child's welfare. This will include information that may be sensitive, but is nonetheless necessary. It may need to cover:
 - Physical, psychological and emotional health
 - Allergies
 - Phobias
 - Medication (including dosage and who may administer)
 - Special dietary requirements
 - Details of recent illness and/or contact with contagious or infectious disease
 - Toileting difficulties
 - History of sleepwalking
 - Water confidence and swimming ability
 - Religious requirements.
- To give medical consent, providing authority for your child to receive emergency treatment, including administration of an anaesthetic or blood transfusion.
- To be able to establish indirect contact with your child in the event of a home emergency. This will probably be by an emergency contact phone number provided by the Visit Leader.

Looked-After Children

Where a child is in care, then there should be an agreement between the carer(s) (such as foster carers) and the legal parent or guardian (such as a Local Authority acting as a Corporate Parent) about the extent to which a carer may make decisions about visits or give consent for them. The arrangements for delegated decision making and accountability are commonly described in the Social Care delegation policy of the Local Authority.

A child in foster care should be able to live as normal a life as possible and take part in activities in much the same way as any other child, particularly any birth children within the foster family. Delegation should be in place so that foster parents are able to give informed consent for visits organised by, for example, schools and voluntary organisations. Foster parents should know when and how to seek guidance and/or permission from the Local Authority, for example, if considering leading the family in an adventure activity or going overseas.

Helping with a Visit

Sometimes schools, youth groups and other establishments ask parents to give practical help during a visit. If you are considering helping with a visit, please see document 3.4m "Helper".

