

OEAP EG: SEN and Disabled Children on Visits and Off-site Activities

When working with young people who are disabled or have special educational needs, the staff-pupil ratios on visits should be increased.

- Where a young person has a 1:1 member of staff working with him/her in accordance with his/her statement of SEN, such 1:1 staff member should not be considered to be part of the overall staffing ratio, as their role will be focussed on their charge's wellbeing.
- Parents should always be informed that a visit will be taking place, so ensuring that additional needs can be accommodated.
- Where the young person is the subject of an individual risk assessment or behaviour/care plan, the plan should be consulted and inform the overall plan for the visit.
- All staff involved in any visit should be fully briefed, ensuring that staff understand their assigned roles and, in particular, who will be directly supervising those young people who are for example, likely to abscond, display challenging behaviour, or have an epileptic seizure.
- A preliminary visit is strongly recommended.
- Staff should be confident regarding the staffing ratio for a particular visit, before the visit goes ahead.

Levels of Supervision

The following factors should be considered when determining staffing requirements;

- the need to administer medication;
- the need for a member of staff to accompany a child to the toilet;
- the likelihood of a young person absconding;
- the likelihood of a medical emergency arising;
- the way in which being away from the normal setting will affect behaviour e.g. some young people have unpredictable fears and phobias which will be more difficult to cope with out of their normal environment;
- the flexibility for staff working on a 1:1 basis to take a break;
- if a member of staff is driving a minibus, they may not be able to deal with emergencies and it may require another member of staff as part of the staffing ratio;
- a preliminary visit will reduce the likelihood of unforeseen contingencies such as lack of disabled access or parking spaces;
- the risk of violence/assault;
- the need for manual handling of young people;
- the need for restraint and deployment of trained staff;
- parents will be able to offer advice on how a young person is likely to behave on a visit;
- staff should be experienced in dealing with the behaviour and particular needs of the young people involved.

Decisions on whether a particular young person may be taken on a particular visit should be the result of wide discussion with all interested parties, including head teacher/manager, Visit Leader/class teacher, parent, support staff and possibly their GP and any third party provider. Such consultation should take place well before the visit. This is especially important when considering including or excluding a young person with serious behavioural issues. (See Inclusion and legal issues.)