



Trips Away With Children & Vulnerable Adults

Guidelines for Responsible Adults

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1 Introduction

These guidelines bring together the various policies and procedures that apply to any person taking a group of orienteers away on a training trip, to an event or overseas for a training camp:

- British Orienteering's guidelines to clubs and associations on the recruitment and selection of volunteers

Any person taking a group away has an ethical 'duty of care' as well as a legal responsibility under the Children Act for the safety and well-being of the children in the group at all times.

Do not take your responsibility lightly. You are not on 'holiday', but on duty 24 hours a day.

Responsible adults will have been vetted according to current practice, and should ensure that they are fully aware of 'O-Safe – A Guide To Safeguarding Children & Vulnerable Adults', British Orienteering's Child Protection policy and procedures.

2 Physical Contact

Current advice regarding physical contact with children should be followed (see O-Safe). Adults should be aware of, and abide by, the relevant staff Code of Conduct (that for coaches is included within O-Safe).

3 Participant's Code of Conduct

The responsible adults should ensure that participants and their parents/Guardians have read and understood the relevant Code of Conduct for Participants, and should reinforce these rules at every opportunity.

4 Discipline

Disciplinary measures may at times be necessary, and such procedures must be conducted with fairness. Firm guidelines for behaviour, curfews, rendezvous times, etc. must be laid down clearly to the participants, so that they know what is expected of them at all times. At least two responsible adults must be present and involved in any disciplinary matter, and the child must, if at all possible, be represented by an accompanying adult. Participants and parents/guardians will have read and signed

the relevant Code of Conduct and will be aware of possible procedures and sanctions.

Be aware at all times of possible tensions within the group. Orienteering is an individual sport, and its competitive nature may lead to jealousies and to bullying.

5 Supervision/Coaching Ratios

Government Guidance states clearly that when working with groups of children under 8 years of age there should be 1 supervising adult for every 6 children (Care Standards Act 2000). Participants under the age of 17 must be supervised at all times and cannot be included in staffing ratios. For young people over the age of 8, experience has shown that a ratio of 1 adult to 10 participants is a minimum requirement in keeping with models of best practice. In addition the Orienteering Safety Guidelines states that there must always be at least 2 supervisors with any group, this is to ensure that at least one other supervisor/coach continues to oversee the group while any injury or problem is dealt with.

If there are participants of both sexes on the trip, the responsible adults should be at least one of each sex. At least one of the responsible adults should be trained in First Aid.

The national guidance states that the level of supervision should take account of:

- The age and ability of the young people;
- The activity being undertaken;
- Children's growing independence;
- Children's need for privacy;
- The geography of the venue being used;
- The risk assessment.

Your pre-activity planning should ensure that, should there be an accident or an incident involving a young person or member of staff, there will be enough qualified people remaining to supervise the group safely.

Instructors/Coaches working with young people should not work in isolation. Good practice suggests that at least one other adult in addition to the Coach should be present at every session. The additional adult does not have to be a qualified Instructor/Coach.

6 Accommodation

Boys and girls should be in separate sleeping quarters, and children must not share rooms with adult staff members. An exception may be made in the case of married couples or families.

7 Supervision

At least one of the responsible adults should be with the children at all times, or at least within very easy reach. The children must at all times know the whereabouts of at least one of the responsible adults in case of emergency.

Where there are organised events for the adults (e.g. race events, social events) it is reasonable for all the responsible adults to attend these only if the conditions above pertain, i.e. the children must know how to contact them and be able to do so readily (e.g. in the same building). If this is impracticable, then one responsible adult should remain with the children for the duration of the event.

The responsible adults should lead by example, and reasonable standards of behaviour in respect of alcohol consumption should be upheld by all on the trip. At least one of the responsible adults should maintain complete abstinence from alcohol at a given time in case of emergency.

8 Insurance

Insurance documents should be carried by the lead adult at all times in case of accident.

The lead adult should carry, or have access to, extra funds in case of any emergency (e.g. hospital treatment of a child).

9 Gaining Experience from the Trip

Finally, participants should be encouraged to make the most of the opportunities in the course of the event – whether in making friends from other areas or nations, identifying and achieving personal goals in orienteering (including in competition), or in discovering a little about the regions they are visiting.

10 Young Orienteers Taking Part in Senior Events

Parents/Guardians must be made aware of the nature of the event the trip is going to and should confirm their acceptance of the arrangements by signing a parental consent form explaining the nature of the trip, the objectives and benefits to their son

or daughter. This form will also be used to record emergency contact details and relevant medical details. This is particularly relevant if the trip will be to an event that both junior and seniors will be taking part at.

Athletes and parents should receive details of the arrangements along with the invitation to attend. Travel plans should be suitable for juniors and communicated to the athlete and parent well in advance

Accommodation and social arrangements must not expose young people to inappropriate situations.

It should be noted that the organisation of training or competitions for seniors may not consider the extra needs of juniors selected to train or compete when making arrangements for travel, accommodation and social events. Junior athletes will already be participating in a programme of junior training and competition and invitations to attend additional senior events, while attractive, will not always suit individuals. The physical demands of senior courses or training exercises may stretch some juniors too far.

As a matter of policy the selection of a junior athlete for a senior competition should be by exception only, with preference given to those of the right age class. If selected, juniors should not run up more than one age class.

The distances and technical demands of training must not be excessive for the individuals and the lead coach is expected to monitor and advise the junior members of the group.

The activity should have a designated leader, responsible for arrangements and contactable by parents. The leader will be responsible for complying with the requirements included in O-Safe.

11 Child Welfare In Rough Terrain

11.1 Background

Many of the issues and guidance on Child Welfare are common to all sports, and indeed to all school and club environments. There are, however, some situations that are either unique to, or are made more tricky by, the terrain in which many orienteering activities take place. This item gives some examples and is intended to provoke thought and promote best practice.

11.2 Understanding the risks

Children, who take part in orienteering, and their parents and guardians, must accept that the terrain can sometimes be a dangerous environment; accidents in rough terrain can lead to injury. Coaches, instructors and leaders can minimise these risks through their skills and experience, but risks cannot be eliminated completely. In more dangerous situations, greater care and greater ability are required from all participants.

Clubs should always give clear guidance in advance regarding the type of activity, the level of experience or qualifications of the leader, the remoteness of the location and any other special factors (eg isolated accommodation). Children, parents and guardians should ensure, through comparison and discussion with the trip leader, that they have clearly understood the level of risk associated with the activity to be undertaken.

Coaches, instructors and leaders shall be free to refuse to take into rough terrain any person (of any age) who appears not to have an adequate understanding of the risks or who does not take precautions appropriate to the prevailing environment. They should satisfy themselves that any child is sufficiently mature to understand the risks and to cope, both physically and mentally, with the conditions that may be encountered.

11.3 Group safety

The safety of the whole group is always paramount. Coaches, instructors and leaders must constantly assess factors such as the weather, visibility and terrain conditions when determining the activity to be undertaken or the area to be used.

Outside of the actual orienteering activity there are very few situations in which it is acceptable for the group to be split up (an injury in a remote location might be an exception); generally the whole group must stay within the area allocated by the responsible person for the session.

Where a child must leave the group (for example to visit the toilet), it is preferable for two or more to go together, and they should go no further than is necessary for privacy.

11.4 Stress and tiredness

Coaches, instructors and leaders must be alert to signs of cold and tiredness, which may lead to errors of judgement. The same applies to stress caused by a child being

stretched beyond his or her limits. Although such stress is not always unhealthy, and is sometimes a necessary part of learning, it can be dangerous if taken to extremes or if combined with other risk factors.

Competition is an essential part of many orienteering activities, and even informal competition can lead to greater enjoyment and motivation. Coaches, instructors and leaders should, however, ensure that this is never harmful and that it would not lead to over-exertion or excessive risk-taking.

12 Safety Guidelines

The intention of these guidelines is to promote safe orienteering – often to young people in challenging, enjoyable and appropriate ways; to provide clubs, schools and outdoor centres.

Important points to be considered prior to activity commencing:

1. Orienteering is not a 'stop gap' activity. It requires properly structured planning, organisation and appropriate briefing of participants with regard to behaviour, the limitations of the area and potential hazards.
2. The coach or leader in charge should be qualified and competent at a level relevant to the venue and to the conditions prevailing.
3. The activity must be planned with due consideration for the ability and preparedness of the group. Orienteering skills required by the session may need to be taught or revised before the participants set off.
4. At all levels a qualified First Aider and appropriate accident response kit should be on hand.
5. The emergency procedures in place must be relevant to the situation (terrain, location, participants, weather etc).
6. It is not normally good practice to send participants out on a long course. It is often preferable to opt for a series of short out-and-back exercises or loops over distances of 500 to 2,000 metres (or even less) so that the competence, morale and safety of the participants can be monitored.
7. There should always be a responsible person at the "Start" and "Finish" points for the activity whilst participants are out. An extra adult, without a specific coaching commitment, should be with any group in case of emergencies.

8. Safety for orienteering is best assessed by considering carefully the nature of the area to be used. In the next section, the approximate gradings A to D can only be indications. It is emphasized that a risk assessment should be carried out before the activity.

12.1 Guidance on Areas Appropriate for Orienteering

Type A Areas: Private “safe” areas such as School or Outdoor Centre grounds; small and “simple” areas with very clear boundaries, good access, plenty of handrail features such as paths or fences and so small as to allow supervision of the participants at frequent intervals. An absence of all such hazards as busy traffic, crags, fast or deep water. Suggested staffing ratios are 1 to 12 at centres and 1 to 30 in school grounds. There should be at least 1 qualified leader to 20 with at least 1 other competent leader to monitor the activity and assist skill development at Club Events or on “simple” areas.

Some safety issues - If the activity concerned is a trip to a Club Orienteering Event with an organised group then it is especially important to give them advice about a cut off time at which they should “retire” if they have not completed the course. Emphasize that all starters in an event or activity must report to the Finish.

Type B Areas: “Other” local areas and small woods; it is recommended that there is at least 1 coach qualified at Level 1. Suggested staffing ratios are 1 qualified Instructor to 20 with at least one other competent leader to monitor the activity and assist skill development.

Some safety issues - Taking part in pairs can increase confidence and perceptions of safety for beginners or the young. Staff should be prepared to travel quickly around the area when necessary – for instance by running or cycling. Boundaries and appropriate relocation strategies should be made known to the participants. Where boundaries are hard to define, the use of marshals at points causing concern is recommended.

Type C Areas: Include easier forests or easier country parks and sites with clear boundaries and ready access for assistance or for emergency vehicles. The lead coach should hold a Level 2 qualification and the suggested staffing ratios are 1 to 10 for experienced competent participants; 1 to 10 with at least 2 competent staff for a less experienced group.

Type D Areas: Complex, exposed or mountainous areas should be avoided except where sufficient staffing expertise is present. Recommended qualification is a Coach

Level Four certificate with suggested staffing ratios of 1 to 10 with at least 2 competent staff.

12.2 Preparing for a Session

There is no substitute for good pre session planning and preparation.

Introductory sessions may well be to induct or develop participants in the sport of orienteering, using safe and controlled environments where they can learn relevant map-use skills. An important safety factor will be to analyse participants skill levels and ensure that participants have been taught at least the basic skills of orienteering. An analysis can identify skills likely to be needed for the session which is planned. The skills of the sport are spelt out in the “Step System” for teaching, available from British Orienteering.

Appropriate course planning is crucial to safe and appropriate orienteering. It is a procedure to be learnt, not left to chance. An understanding of concepts such as “decision points”, “handrails”, and “catching features” and how to incorporate them into a course is needed.

Before the session starts the following information should be known: the type of group, numbers and standard of participants, ages, duration of session, and other relevant details (such as the weather forecast and any local hazards).

Organisation – This includes tasks to be done before the session starts. Control markers may need to be put out, maps pre-marked, control descriptions written, compasses, whistles, first aid kit and any other equipment collected together. Safety briefing sheets should be prepared.

12.3 Equipment for Various Levels of Activity

1. The orienteering map should be to International Orienteering Federation standards, up to date and suitably weather proofed either on waterproof paper or in a plastic bag or by lamination (clip boards or neck worn map cases are generally unsuitable for orienteering). Having a map each is better than sharing maps. Appropriately skilled and experienced mapmakers may be contacted through British Orienteering.
2. Compasses; research has shown that children as young as 7 can use compasses for map orientation. Compasses are essential when the use of a safety bearing is required. It is preferable that all participants have a compass each. However this recommendation needs to be balanced against the costs

of obtaining and maintaining a good stock of suitable compasses – and against the time needed to issue, collect, check and store them.

3. Whistles; for any activity away from an outdoor centre or school, consider issuing a plastic whistle to all participants. They need to know that whistles are only to be used in a real emergency (leaders may need to explain what could constitute such an emergency). They ought to know the accepted emergency signal (6 short blasts – rest – repeat until help arrives). A whistle should be carried for all serious training and competition.
Leaders of less experienced groups need to balance against this recommendation that playing with the whistles or frivolous use can be a real possibility and they might decide not to issue them but to insist on paired participation and close monitoring by staff instead.
4. Watch; it can be very helpful to have a wrist watch each, or - if in pairs - one between two; children need to know when their time to return to a set point is.
5. First Aid Kit; a kit should be kept at an appropriate point near to the activity, along with other accident response resources (such as a mobile phone, where reception is known to be available). All participants and helpers should know the location of this accident response kit. Properly completed consent/medical forms should be readily available in respect of each person taking part.
6. Clothing; participants in orienteering should wear appropriate clothing including full leg cover (not shorts). This is a standard rule of the sport to protect against cuts from brambles, branches and so on. Activities in cold weather or poor conditions require layered clothing with a windproof and/or waterproof shell garment. With children bad weather will probably require the activity to be cancelled. Footwear should be sturdy with a good tread on the sole. Equipment should not be carried on strings round the neck because of a risk of catching the string on a tree for example.
7. Control markers; even around centres and school grounds it is preferable that proper orienteering control markers and punches are used so that participants become familiar with their use. Needle punches may be used or possibly electronic computerised punching in some situations. The three sided orange and white nylon markers are available in various sizes. They should be used in any area that does not have a proper permanent orienteering course. Any markers, whether nylon ones, permanent posts or other types, should be easy to see and clearly recognisable. Whichever markers are used, all participants

must be made aware of what they are looking for. It is undesirable to damage trees by permanently fixing markers to them.

8. Participants' details; the person responsible for the group should retain details of all the participants, including their names, ages and addresses, contacts to be used in the event of an emergency, the number of people in the group, the date and time of the session, the leaders, the location, a copy of the courses, the cut off time and estimated time of return.

12.4 Briefing the Participants

For many groups a pre-session explanation will be needed to ensure that participants understand as many of the following points as are relevant:

- The purpose of the exercise
- How to perform the key orienteering skills required
- The need for an equipment check
- The location of the "Start" and "Finish"
- The cut off time
- The importance of reporting back by that time regardless of course completion.
- The area to be used - including its boundaries (e.g. stay in the forest), dangerous areas (e.g. crags), out of bounds sections (e.g. private property)
- What to do if lost e.g. use a safety bearing
- Specific hazards e.g. dangers to eyes near low branches, the risks of crossing slippery rock, or of steep descents at speed
- First aid and emergency procedures
- The relevance of the Country Code
- The need for ethical behaviour

12.5 The Need for Insurance

All orienteering activities need to be covered by liability insurance, for protection against claims for damages, negligence etc. All activities conducted by British Orienteering staff or other representatives, and all activities registered with British Orienteering, are automatically covered by the British Orienteering insurance cover. British Orienteering members can register any event, coaching or training session through their association fixtures secretary. Liability cover may also be provided through the school, local authority, sports coach UK, or the Institute for Outdoor Learning. If in doubt, register with British Orienteering.

British Orienteering insurance and other liability insurances do not provide personal accident cover. It is a standard condition of British Orienteering events that participants take part at their own risk. Schools, Outdoor Centre Organisers, Youth Groups or others who feel that commercial non-British Orienteering Personal accident cover for participants might be advisable should suggest this to participants or to their parents well in advance of the activity.

12.6 Environmental Considerations

Whilst orienteering is no more damaging to the environment than other human activities and less than many, all activities should be carried out with the conservation of the environment in mind. Control sites or posts that are frequently used ought to be moved from time to time to reduce foot erosion.

On all issues raised above, British Orienteering can give advice or training. British Orienteering has a scheme of having centres registered as accredited Orienteering Centres.

13 Risk Assessment for Orienteering

Orienteering is a difficult sport to supervise - you cannot just send a group out and keep your fingers crossed! Particularly where children are concerned, you should do a risk assessment before any session of teaching, coaching or training.

Risk assessments are about identifying the hazards - things that might go wrong – evaluating the likelihood of a particular event occurring and then adapting the plan and/or safety precautions accordingly.

Here are a few things that could go wrong:

Children could:	Likely Causes:	Possible Actions:
Get tired, wet and cold with a risk of hypothermia; or alternatively get hot, dehydrated and exhausted. Both situations can be life threatening.	Deteriorating weather in open moorland. Poor clothing. Courses too ambitious. Too long a day. No protection from the sun. Not enough to drink.	Take spare kit, drink etc. Avoid open areas in adverse weather; if you have to use them plan short exercises where you can maintain regular contact with the children. Provide shelter.
Get lost, panic, make poor decisions. Have an accident.	Map disintegrating. Lost map. Running off the map.	Careful course planning. Cover maps. Draw up courses in the dry. Use

	Running too fast. Course too hard. Controls hidden or controls not there. No safety procedure. Area has no clear boundaries etc.	Tyvek control cards. Personally check control sites. Place assistant at point where children are likely to make a major error.
Do something silly before they leave giving themselves little chance of getting round the course.	Not listening to instructions. Copying controls down wrongly. Not using a waterproof pen. Forgetting compass / whistle etc.	Check understanding, kit and maps etc. before start. Build up the amount of responsibility handed over to members of group gradually.
Have a medical condition which you don't know about. Asthma, diabetes, epilepsy.....	No medication. No medical forms. Too shy to tell you etc.	Medical forms filled in. Ensure staff have good first aid skills and equipment.
Have to cross busy roads with major traffic hazards	Poorly planned course.	Have an assistant at the road crossing.

You could experience any of the above yourself. In addition, you or your assistant could put the controls in the wrong place, forget to put one out - or collect some in before the last people have visited them, you could even drive off and leave someone behind in the forest!

So, to re-emphasise: orienteering is unlike supervising any other sport because for the majority of the time children are out of your sight, off in the woods on their own. It is vital that you get into the habit of doing a risk assessment before each session.

14 Assessing Risk

Brainstorm the potential hazards for your session. Score each one according to the level of risk. A scale of 1- 3 may be helpful here:

1. Not a major problem.
2. Slightly more of a problem than usual.
3. Real problem with this exercise in this area.

Now decide what you should do, for risks assessed on the scale as level:

1. No need to worry.
2. Take normal precautions for orienteering exercises.*

3. Take special precautions for this exercise or go elsewhere or do something different.

* It is worth remembering that risk assessments carried out by inexperienced people are unreliable simply because they are not aware of the potential hazards or the possible easy solutions. If in doubt, consult a more experienced instructor / coach, your local orienteering club may be able to put you in touch with someone who can advise you.

USEFUL TIPS-

- Always visit an area before you take a group there. Check the control sites.
- Check the safety of the area, bear in mind danger from the terrain but also if there are areas where a child could become isolated, lost or even worse approached by a stranger.
- Plan courses thoughtfully and allow yourself plenty of time to put controls out.
- Write safety instructions with phone numbers on all the maps or control cards.
- Check for understanding with your children. Check that they have a whistle and compass and know how to use them.
- Know your children's medical details, normal behaviour, responsibility level etc.
- Err on the safe side.
- Plan exercises which are easy to control until you are certain that your group is capable of acting sensibly and sticking to the safety procedures you have set up.
- Take spare kit along with you.
- Have a check system, even if you are not using control cards, for who went out when and with whom.
- Make sure there is always a responsible adult at base so that members of the group can come for help at any time.
- Brief your helpers very carefully. If they are inexperienced, consider doing a dress rehearsal before the session. Don't ask them to do more than they are capable of!
- Allow plenty of time for exercises, especially in winter when it gets dark early.
- Know where the nearest telephone is. Take a road map in the car or minibus.
- Be flexible about how much you will achieve in your session. Things usually take longer than you expect.

15 Reference

The ASA, NSPCC and the Child Protection in Sport Unit have produced SafeSportAway with the full support of National Governing Bodies of Sport and Sport England. SafeSportAway is a guide to assist anyone responsible for planning sports events to prepare safely and sensibly for trips away and to fulfil their duty to care for the young people taking part in the activities.

The guide is written for any sports organisation that regularly takes athletes away for a one day away event; overnight stays, or travelling abroad.

Copies of the guide costing £5.75 (cheques payable to the “NSPCC Registered Charity”) can be obtained from the Child Protection in Sport Unit, NSPCC National Training Centre, 3 Gilmour Close, Beaumont Leys, Leicester, LE4 1EZ.

British Orienteering recommends the guide to all clubs and individuals involved in taking children away on tours or to events.

16 Checklist for Day Trip

Communication with parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pick up times• Destination, areas and weather forecast• Event or activity details• Kit• Other requirements
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Journey times and stopping points• Supervision• Suitability, accessibility• Drivers checked• Insurance• Seat belts
Supervision and staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ratio of staff to athletes• Male/female• Specialist carers• Responsibilities
Emergency procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First aid• Specific medical details• Reporting procedures• Home contact details• Athlete information
Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Liability• Adequate cover

17 Checklist for Overnight Stays

Purpose of the trip	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Competition, training, social, combination
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• When• Where• Who• Risk assessment of the activity
Communication with parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pick up times• Destination and venue• Competition details• Kit and equipment list• Emergency procedures, home contact• Consent form• Code of conduct
Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What type• Catering special diets, allergies• Suitability for group, accessibility• Rooming lists
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Journey times and stopping points• Supervision• Suitability and accessibility• Drivers checked• Insurance
Supervision and staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ratio of staff to athletes• Male/female• Specialist carers• Responsibilities
Emergency procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First aid• Specific medical details, allergies• Reporting procedures• Home contact details
Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Liability• Accident
Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For travel

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Payment schedule – deposit, staged payment• Extra meals, refreshments• Spending money• Security
Arrival	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check rooms, meal times, phones, valuables• Check areas, terrain and weather forecast• Collect in money, valuables• Information on medications• Arrange group meetings• Confirm procedures with staff• Rules, curfews
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safe Sport Away Cards

18 Checklist for Travel Abroad/Hosting Events

Purpose of trip	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Competition, training, social, combination
Communication with parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pick up times• Destination and venue• Competition details• Kit and equipment list• Emergency procedures, home contact• Consent form• Code of conduct
Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What type• Catering, special diets, allergies• Suitability for group, accessibility• Rooming lists
Hosting or being hosted	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hosts vetted• Hosts aware of special requirements• Transport arrangements• Telephone contact• Local map and information
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Journey time and stopping points• Supervision• Suitability and access• Drivers checked• Insurance
Supervision / staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ratio of staff to athletes• Male/female• Specialist carers• Responsibilities
Emergency procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• First aid• Special medical information• Medications• E111 form (EU visits)
Insurance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Liability• Accident

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel • Medical
Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For trip • Payment schedule deposit, staged payments • Extra meals, refreshments • Spending money • Security
Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel tickets • Passports, visas • Check non EU nationals
Preparing athletes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local culture, language • Food and drink • Currency • Telephones • Maps of area
Arrival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check rooms, meal times, phones, valuables • Check areas, terrain and weather forecast • Collect money, valuables • Information on medications • Arrange group meeting(s) • Confirm care and child protection procedures with group/staff • Rules, curfews