**21: Visits and Outings**

Willows believe that visits and outings play an important and enriching role in the programme of activities that we provide for children. However, during such events, the safety of the children remains paramount.

Prior to a visit or outing, if logistically possible, a member of staff will carry out an exploratory visit of the proposed destination so as to pre-empt any potential difficulties.

The directors will ensure that a thorough risk assessment has been carried out prior to the proposed visit or outing, according to the provisions set out in the Risk Assessment policy. This should include consideration of the journey and any transportation involved. If a prior visit is not possible, the proprietor will write to the venue requesting all relevant information and a risk assessment statement where available.

It is the directors responsibility to give permission for the outing to take place, having first checked all arrangements and completed a formal risk assessment.

Willows will make every effort to involve children in the planning of a visit or outing. Staff will explain to children to aim and objectives of the event, along with what is expected of them in terms of their behaviour and contribution.

Staff will be sensitive to children’s religion/beliefs in selecting places to visit.

Children will be talked through any potential safety hazards and told to remain with staff at all times. Staff will explain to children what to do in an emergency, including designating a suitable meeting point.

**Parental Consent**

Willows will provide parents with two weeks’ notice regarding any proposed outings or visits, this will include a full programme of activities, costs involved, journey involved and mode of transport being used as well as approximate arrival and departure times.

Parental consent is needed for all off-site visits and outings. The directors will arrange for photocopies of consent forms to be taken on the trip while the originals will be stored in the Willows records.

Parents/carers have the absolute right to withhold consent for a proposed visit or outing. No child without a signed consent form will be allowed to participate.

**During visits and outings**

On visits and outings, the staff to child ratio will be 1:8 subject to the nature of the activity and the risk assessment.

* Children will remain under close supervision at all times.
* There will always be at least one member of staff present on the outing who has a current paediatric first aid certificate.
* The proprietor/manager will ensure that a full First Aid kit is on hand, in compliance with the relevant provisions of the Health, Illness and Emergency Policy.
* Two designated members of staff will keep mobile phones with them and their numbers will be circulated to parents/carers in advance of the visit or outing. These numbers will also be kept on site in case of an emergency.
* A register will be taken at the beginning, middle and end of the visit or outing. Additionally, regular head counts will be taken by staff during the visit or outing.
* A list of all members of staff and children participating, with relevant mobile phone numbers will be left with the member of staff left on duty at the setting’s premises (if staff numbers allow for such a provision).
* Any coach or minibus that is used must have appropriate seatbelts/harnesses. Staff or private cars can only be used if they carry the correct insurance.
* Records will be kept about vehicles in which children are transported, including insurance details and a list of named drivers.

**Lost child – outings**

Regular head counts are carried out on children throughout the outing or visit. In the unlikely event of a child going missing whilst on an outing, the following procedure will be implemented:

* All staff present will be informed and an immediate search of the area will be made, ensuring that all other children remain supervised throughout.
* If appropriate, on-site security will also be informed and a description of the child/children given.
* In the event of a child not being found, the designated person in charge will immediately inform the police.
* The designated person in charge will then inform the directors, who will contact the child’s parents/carers giving details of what has happened.
* Staff from the setting will be sent to assist the safe return of the other children.
* At least one member of staff will remain at the scene to continue searching for the child/children.
* The remaining member of staff will meet the police and parents/carers when they arrive.
* The directors will inform Ofsted of any serious incidents.