



2.11 Guidance note: Supervision of activities and trips, including overnight stays

Travelling to away games and tournaments should be both safe and fun for children.

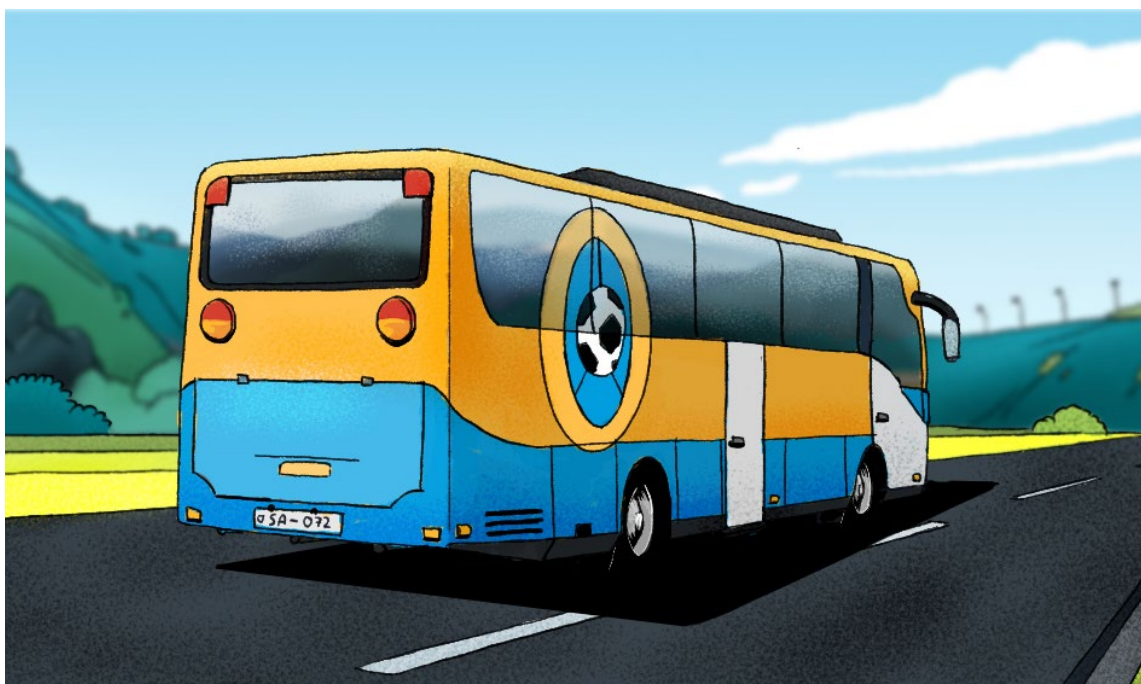
Parents and carers will often worry when their children are away, but careful planning and preparation should help to ease those worries and demonstrate that you have considered the various needs of their children and the potential dangers of a trip away.

The following considerations will help to implement proper safeguarding measures.

Supervision levels

Decide on the necessary level of supervision, given the age and number of children. Minimum adult-to-child ratios may be established by law.

Typically, the younger the children, or the more challenging the activity or environment, the greater the number of adults needed to safely supervise them. Where children have special needs, additional supervision and support may be required.



As a general rule, the following supervision ratios apply:

- Children aged 4–8 years old – one adult for every six children
- Children aged 9–12 years old – one adult for every eight children
- Children aged 13–18 years old – one adult for every ten children

It is always a good idea to have a least two adults supervising any overnight trip or trip that involves a lengthy journey. If something does happen, for example a child needs to be taken to hospital, the other adult can continue to supervise the rest of the children. If male and female supervisors are available, it is important to identify the different roles and responsibilities of each, e.g. regarding supervision in changing rooms and entering bedrooms.

Risk assessment

Additional care and support is required when children are taken from their usual environment to away matches and other activities, such as training camps, especially if the trip involves an overnight stay. A **risk assessment** is recommended for any activity that involves taking children to a different venue/location. A sample risk assessment form can be found in the Child Safeguarding Toolkit.

The purpose of the risk assessment is not to find reasons to cancel a trip! It is to identify any potential risks in advance, so that action can be taken to remove them or reduce their impact. For example, the location of a hotel may not be safe for children, and if this is known in advance it might be possible to change to a different hotel. This helps ensure that the trip or activity is safe and fun. It is important to remember that if a trip or activity cannot take place safely, it should be cancelled.

Trips and overnight stays

In these guidelines, the term 'accompanying adult' is used to refer to adults accompanying children on trips. These adults could be club/organisation staff members, such as coaches, but may also include parents and other volunteers. An accompanying adult does not mean someone who is travelling in a personal capacity as a supporter; it refers to someone who has agreed to take on the responsibility to ensure that the trip is safe and enjoyable.

The guiding principle in all situations is that **the best interests of the child(ren) are of the utmost importance**. The way in which accompanying adults take care of children and teenagers should be appropriate to their age and maturity.

Accompanying adults play an important role in taking the primary responsibility for the safety and welfare of children in their care **at all times**. This starts from the time when the child leaves their parent/carer and only ends when they are safely handed



over to their parent/carer, or as agreed. It must be clearly communicated to parents at what point the responsibility for caring for their children ends in order to avoid any confusion. For example, it may be agreed that parents will collect their children from the club upon returning from a trip, or that children will be dropped off at the club grounds and then make their own way home.

The best arrangement is where parents accompany their own children on trips. This helps the parents feel and be part of the club/organisation. It also eases the burden of responsibility on clubs/organisations and reduces the risk of confusion regarding arrangements.

Ideally, and especially before an overnight trip, there should be a short meeting with parents and children to confirm the various arrangements for the trip or this information should be provided in writing. Parents should be given emergency contact numbers for those supervising the trip. It can also be useful to ask children to sign a behaviour code or help to develop one, so that they know what is expected of them on the trip.

Parents must always give consent for their children to take part. Basic medical and emergency contact information should also be obtained prior to the trip. Sample consent and medical forms are included in this document?. Depending on the location, it may be against the law for anyone other than a doctor or health professional to administer medications. Clubs/organisations need to determine what rules apply to their location.

Role of accompanying adults

In addition to the expected behaviour set out in the code of conduct, accompanying adults are responsible for:

- Ensuring the safety and well-being of children. This will mean carrying out a risk assessment in advance, including for transport and accommodation.
- Communicating with the parents before and during the trip, as necessary.
- Arranging or confirming all necessary details such as accommodation, destination, programme, competition details, kit and equipment list and transport, including making sure that vehicles are roadworthy and safe. Depending on the location, this could include ensuring that transport only takes place during certain (daylight) hours.
- Checking that consent forms have been signed by parents and children.
- Being aware of any special needs, including any medical requirements, impairments, access needs or medication. This will depend on the country, as in some countries there are strict rules about administering medication or giving medical treatment to children, and who can do this. In all cases, accompanying adults need

to be clear about any special needs and also have emergency contact numbers for parents.

- Checking that children have any necessary travel or identity documents or permits.
- Ensuring that all children have emergency phone numbers on them at all times during the trip.
- Being physically near the children and aware of their whereabouts at **all times**. Children must not be left unsupervised, even for short periods of time. This means that accompanying adults should not leave children alone in hotels in the evening.
- Not allowing children to leave the group with adults, including family members, unless this has been agreed in advance, and permission has been given by the child's parents.
- Being aware of children's physical and emotional needs and helping meet those needs as appropriate or making every effort to meet those needs.
- Making sure that the children and teenagers can communicate with other groups of children, for example by helping translate if children only speak local dialects or have communication difficulties.
- Keeping copies of parents' emergency contact numbers with them at all times and informing parents immediately of any problems.
- Reporting any concerns regarding the safety, protection and well-being of children to the child safeguarding focal point or management, including if children go missing.
- Administering the correct medication and dosage to children, if legal in the country in question and if agreed in advance by parents/carers.
- Not allowing children to stay alone overnight in any adult's room (except for family members) or sleep in the same bed as any adult.

Emergency situations and medical emergencies

- In the event of an emergency, a child's parents must be contacted immediately, or as soon as possible.
- In the event of a medical emergency, immediate medical help must be sought.