

Holiday activities and food programme 2021 - Updated 27 April 2021

Standards for holiday provision

We have developed a framework of standards to provide a benchmark of what we expect from those delivering the holiday activities and food programme.

One of the key elements of the role of a holiday activities and food programme coordinator will be to:

- improve the quality of provision across the local area
- ensure that providers are supported to meet the high-level standards

Programme coordinators will be able to award funding to providers that don't meet the standards at the start of the grant period as long as they put a specific plan in place to ensure that the standards are met before the start of the holidays.

We expect all providers who are funded through the holiday activities and food programme to meet our framework of standards.

Framework of standards

These are the standards we expect for 2021 providers.

Food

Providers must provide at least one meal a day (breakfast, lunch or tea) and all food provided at the holiday club (including snacks) must meet school food standards (<http://www.schoolfoodplan.com/actions/school-food-standards/>).

Our expectation is that the majority of food served by providers will be hot. However, we acknowledge that there will be occasions when this is not possible and a cold alternative may be used.

All food provided as part of the programme must:

- comply with regulations on food preparation:
- take into account allergies and dietary requirements (see the allergy guidance for schools (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools/allergy-guidance-for-schools>))
- take into account any religious or cultural requirements for food

Enriching activities

Holiday clubs must provide fun and enriching activities that provide children with opportunities to:

- develop new skills or knowledge

- consolidate existing skills and knowledge
- try out new experiences

This could include:

- physical activities, for example, football, table tennis or cricket
- creative activities, for example, putting on a play, junk modelling or drumming workshops
- experiences, for example, a nature walk or visiting a city farm

Local authorities should set out how they can support providers to deliver a rich and varied mix of fun and enriching activities that are age-appropriate. We welcome bids that have also considered how they might encourage the continued use of fine motor skills over the holiday periods.

Physical activities

Holiday clubs must provide activities that meet the physical activity guidelines

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/physical-activity-guidelines-uk-chief-medical-officers-report>) on a daily basis.

Nutritional education

Providers must include an element of nutritional education each day aimed at improving the knowledge and awareness of healthy eating for children. These do not need to be formal learning activities and could for example include activities such as:

- getting children involved in food preparation and cooking
- growing fruit and vegetables
- taste tests

Food education for families and carers

Providers must include at least weekly training and advice sessions for parents, carers or other family members. These should provide advice on how to source, prepare and cook nutritious and low-cost food.

Signposting and referrals

Holiday clubs must be able to provide information, signposting or referrals to other services and support that would benefit the children who attend their provision and their families. This could include sessions provided by:

- Citizen's Advice
- school nurses, dentists or other healthcare practitioners
- family support services or children's services

- housing support officers
- Jobcentre Plus
- organisations providing financial education

Policies and procedures

There are a wide variety of organisations and individuals involved in the delivery of the holiday activities and food programme including but not limited to:

- schools
- colleges
- nurseries
- private providers
- charities
- youth clubs
- community groups

As set out in the grant determination letter (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/holidayactivities-and-food-programme>), all of these groups must be able to demonstrate and explain the safeguarding procedures and checks that they have in place for the holiday activities and food programme.

They must have relevant and appropriate policies and procedures for:

- safeguarding, including the recruitment of staff and volunteers
- health and safety
- relevant insurance policies
- accessibility and inclusiveness

Where appropriate, holiday clubs must also be compliant with the Ofsted requirements for working with children.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is everyone's responsibility. We want every holiday club to be a safe and happy place for children to be and for parents, carers and families to feel confident that their child is well looked after and that robust safeguarding arrangements are in place.

Local authorities are statutorily responsible for safeguarding in relation to children in need, under s.17 of the Children Act 1989, and looked after children under s.20 of the Children Act 1989.

As set out in working together to safeguard children

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-secure-childrens-future>), safeguarding is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- protecting children from maltreatment

- preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care
- taking action if you identify children to be at risk of harm

Local authorities should ensure that their local safeguarding partners understand the holiday activities and food programme and those working on the delivery of the programme are familiar with the working together to safeguard children

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>) guidance.

There are a number of accredited organisations who can provide safeguarding and child protection training courses for those involved in working with children. We expect local authorities to be able to demonstrate that those involved in the delivery of the holiday activities and food programme in their area are competent and have received adequate training and support.

Holiday clubs in school settings

We know that schools are safe places and have robust safeguarding arrangements in place.

Where activities are provided by the governing body or proprietor of a school, under the direct supervision or management of their school staff the school’s child protection policy will apply.

Where the activities are provided separately by another body, the governing body or proprietor should seek assurance that the body concerned has appropriate safeguarding and child protection policies and procedure in place.

We recommend that anyone involved in the delivery of a holiday club in school settings is familiar with part 1 of keeping children safe in education

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>).

Holiday clubs in out of school settings

By out-of-school settings we mean organisations or individuals that provide tuition, training, instruction or activities to children in England without their parents’ or carers’ supervision, but are not:

- schools
- colleges
- education settings providing alternative provision
- 16 to 19 academies

- providers caring for children that are registered with Ofsted or a childminder agency

These settings generally provide tuition, training, instruction or activities outside normal school hours (for example, evenings, weekends, school holidays), although some settings are run part-time during school hours to help meet the needs of those in home education.

The guidance for providers running out-of-school settings on keeping children safe during community activities, after-school clubs and tuition

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-out-of-school-settings-code-of-practice/keeping-children-safe-during-community-activities-after-school-clubs-and-tuition-non-statutory-guidance-for-providers-running-out-of-school-settings>) covers advice on what policies and procedures providers should have in place for health and safety, safeguarding and child protection, staff suitability, and governance.

Volunteers

We know that in some settings, volunteers can play an important role in the delivery of holiday clubs.

Under no circumstances should a volunteer in respect of whom no checks have been obtained be left unsupervised or allowed to work in regulated activity.

For some of the voluntary staff involved in the delivery of the holiday activities and food programme in holiday clubs, this work will be done regularly and considered to be regulated activity. This means they will be subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check with barred list information.

There may be a very small number of volunteers who do not regularly carry out this role, and so it may not be considered as regulated activity. This means they may not be required to have an enhanced DBS check.

The guidance on regulated activity in relation to children

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>) contains definitions of what we mean by regular and regulated activity.

Example

A guest speaker or presenter visits a holiday activities and food programme club to deliver a talk on nature.

The guest is escorted by staff at the club (who are DBS checked) while on the premises and is not left unsupervised with children at any time. In these circumstances, we would not expect a DBS check to be carried out.

To provide reassurance to parents, families and carers, we strongly recommend that all volunteers who are involved in the delivery of the holiday activities and food programme in holiday clubs should have an enhanced DBS check (<https://www.gov.uk/dbs-check-applicantcriminal-record>) (which, where applicable, should include children's barred list information).

We do not recommend holiday clubs using volunteers that are not DBS checked, but if this occurs, it is the responsibility of the local authority to ensure that volunteers are not left alone and unsupervised with children in holiday clubs.

Other workers

All staff who are employed by holiday club providers funded through the holiday activities and food programme should be subject to an enhanced DBS check with barred list information. Part 3 of keeping children safe in education (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keepingchildren-safe-in-education--2>) sets out a clear process for safe recruitment. We recommend local authorities and holiday clubs providers follow this best practice when recruiting volunteers.