



Guidance for Policy on Outings* in Pre-school Services

*(where children are brought on outings, as set out in the Statement of Purpose and Function)

Contents

1.0 Introduction.....	3
2.0 Core policy requirements.....	3
Requirement 1.....	4
Requirement 2.....	4
Requirement 3.....	5
Requirement 4.....	5
Requirement 5.....	5
Requirement 6.....	6
3.0 Best Practice in developing and implementing an Outings Policy	6
4.0 Appendices	8
4.1 Appendix 1 – Supporting Information.....	8
4.2 Appendix 2 – Considerations for risk assessment and/or risk benefit analysis	9

1.0 Introduction

The purpose of this guidance document is to provide pre-school services with the regulatory requirements for the specific policy on Outings (where children attending are brought on outings as per the Statement of Purpose and Function), as set out by the [Child Care Act \(1991\) Early Years Service Regulations \(2016\)](#). This document provides the core requirements that should be addressed in this policy, as well as prompts and considerations that will support registered providers to ensure that their policy and procedures are fully developed and are reflected in the practices in their service.

The information in this document should be applied to the specific policy covering Outings, and the accompanying procedures of the pre-school service. This document should be read in conjunction with the [A Practical Guide to Developing Policies, Procedures and Statements in Early Years Services](#), and the [Quality and Regulatory Framework](#).

This document is for reference only. It should not be assumed that the guidance provided is comprehensive or that it provides a definitive answer in every situation.

Further resources are available in [Appendix 1](#).

Regulatory Requirements of this Policy

Child Care Act (1991) Early Years Service Regulations (2016), Schedule 5. 1 (i)

An outings policy in relation to a pre-school service, means a policy specifying the measures to be taken to ensure the safety and welfare of pre-school children attending the service when under the control of the service but not on the premises of the service.

2.0 Core policy requirements

A Policy Statement is recommended in this policy, alongside the core requirements as set out further in this document. The outings policy statement should set out the service's commitment to safeguarding children when children have left the service for a planned outing. The policy statement should outline the service's commitment to ensuring that all reasonable measures have been put in place to ensure the safety, welfare and well-being of children when on an outing.

Requirement 1

The policy describes measures to ensure the safety and welfare of children when on an outing.

Prompts and considerations (not an exhaustive list):

The policy specifies:

- (a) The essential equipment, records and staffing for an outing.
- (b) How care practices including toileting and/or nappy changing are maintained, while ensuring the dignity of the child.
- (c) How the service communicates with parent(s)/guardians prior to the outing regarding appropriate clothing and footwear.
- (d) The criteria to ensure the outing is inclusive for the children and/or staff attending, with consideration given to the individual needs of children and/or staff, age and stage of development, abilities, and cultural requirements.
- (e) The measures in place for food and drink provision during an outing, including the provision of snacks and/or meals for the children, alternative and/or additional food for children, and availability of drinking water throughout the outing.
- (f) The procedures regarding the appropriate supervision of all children at all times while on the outing. Specific details for each outing must be recorded within the risk assessment and/or risk benefit analysis.
- (g) The procedures for boarding and exiting transport, taking specific safety considerations into account, for example the use of steps and handrails.

Requirement 2

The policy sets out risk assessment processes and procedures and how the service will respond to identified hazards and risks.

Prompts and considerations (not an exhaustive list)

The policy specifies:

- (a) That the service will carry out a risk assessment prior to each outing to determine the suitability of the outing through assessing, minimising and managing any identified risks, and avoiding/eliminating any identified hazards.
- (b) The person(s) responsible for carrying out the risk assessment for an outing, and for implementing any actions to manage the potential risk(s).
- (c) The process when not proceeding with an outing, if for any reason it is determined it cannot go ahead, including safety issues such as weather.
- (d) That information relating to the outing, and any other relevant information is communicated with staff prior to the outing taking place.
- (e) The safety equipment required in the case of using motor transport.
- (f) How the information relating to the outing is communicated with parent(s) or guardians to include any arrangement in place for the collection and/or drop-off of children.
- (g) How the risk assessment will determine the appropriate adult/child ratio for each outing.

Requirement 3

The policy states the approach to obtaining written parental consent for outings.

Prompts and considerations (not an exhaustive list)

The policy specifies:

- (a) How parental/guardian consent is obtained for each child in a timely manner, prior to the outing.
- (b) How such consents are recorded and records maintained.
- (c) The consent form to be used for this purpose is included within the policy.

Requirement 4

The policy details procedures for the management of a critical incident on outing (e.g., missing child).

Prompts and considerations (not an exhaustive list)

The policy specifies:

- (a) That there are plans in place for a range of childcare emergencies that can happen on an outing (for example, a child goes missing), in line with the Critical Incident Planning material.
- (b) The procedures to ensure staff understand their roles and responsibilities and have the capacity to respond appropriately in the event of a critical incident.
- (c) The procedures in place to limit the effects of the incident on children, families; staff, and any parties affected by the critical incident.

Requirement 5

The policy specifies first aid measures to be in place for the duration of the outing.

Prompts and considerations (not an exhaustive list)

The policy specifies:

- (a) The first aid measures which are in place for the outing, to include but not limited to, access to an appropriately stocked first aid box and, at least one qualified First Aid Responder (FAR).

Requirement 6

The policy details procedures regarding appropriate insurance cover.

Prompts and considerations (not an exhaustive list):

The policy specifies:

- (a) That the insurance company is aware that outings take place and adequate cover is provided.
- (b) The procedures in place to ensure adequate motor insurance is in place. Where relevant, this should refer to the use the service's own and/or other forms of motor transport.

3.0 Best Practice in developing and implementing an Outings Policy

In addition to the regulatory requirements for this policy as set out in this document, service providers can enhance the quality of practice in the implementation of the outings policy in the service. In this section, best practice in this policy area is outlined and further information is signposted where available.

- Implementation of this policy should reflect Sfolta Standards in particular Standard 16 [Community Involvement](#).

Risk Assessment

- The process of risk assessment begins prior to the outing, continues during and following the outing, so as to assess, remove, minimise and manage any identified risks and/or hazards.
- Influential factors to determine the suitability of an outing may include but not be limited to; the suitability of the outing destination, it's relevance/appropriateness to the children, distance to and/or from, method of transport required, minimum adult to child ratio, and individual needs of the children and/or adults.
- When determining the appropriate adult: child ratio for an outing, take into account the nature of the outing and the age/stage of development of the children.
- Reference any other supporting procedure(s) within other service policies within the outings policy and/or risk assessment. In the event where procedures need to be extended, the service policy should be updated prior to the outing. For example, illness of a child and/or staff member during an outing, accident and/or incident during an outing, and a critical incident plan in the event of an emergency, to include a missing child.

- Specify the criteria to support a decision to cancel/postpone an outing which may include but not be limited to the following;
 - Weather warning which poses a risk to the children and staff.
 - An outbreak of an infectious disease,
 - The absence of staff to maintain the adult to child ratio, and/or unavailability of supporting parent(s) or other adults,
 - Absence of a person trained in First Aid Responder (FAR),
 - Unavailability of transport and/or venue,
 - Appropriate clothing unavailable,
 - Other external factors that indicate increased risk.

Communication with staff and parents

- Consider how best to share information with staff and parents about the outing in relation to:
 - Relevant policies and procedures,
 - The risk assessment and/or risk benefit analysis,
 - The adult to child ratio
 - Individual roles and responsibilities.
 - The destination
 - Supervision and safety arrangements
 - Arrangements for eating and drinking
 - Transport, collection and drop off arrangements
 - Cost if relevant
 - Any other relevant issues to be communicated.

4.0 Appendices

4.1 Appendix 1 – Supporting Information

- Aistear Siolta: [Practice Guide](#)
- Barnardos: [Critical Incidents in Early Learning and School Age Care](#)
- Early Childhood Ireland: [Making Children Visible](#)
- Early Education (UK): [Making Trips Out Meaningful](#)
- Early Education (UK): [What Constitutes an Outing or a Visit?](#)

4.2 Appendix 2 – Considerations for risk assessment and/or risk benefit analysis

- Has the departure, arrival and if required, collection times been communicated and confirmed with staff, parents and other relevant person(s) prior to departure from the service?
- What additional items are needed? Nappies, medication, comforter toys, food including snacks, water bottles, and/or change of clothing.
- Are there specific times during the outings which specific actions need to be taken? For example, administration of medication, care plan actions.
- Have expectations and responsibilities communicated with staff? For example, are staff aware of appropriate supervision strategies taking into account possible entry/exit points, fire safety routes and location of sanitary area in the location?
- Prior to the outing, who will be reviewing consent obtained for children? What happens if consent is missing for children?
- Prior to the outing, who confirms the transport and/or venue?
- Do staff have access to a working mobile phone, essential records [to include the attendance records, care plans for individual children if required, emergency contact details], a first aid kit and emergency medication prior to departing the service? Who is responsible for this?
- Has an attendance record been completed alongside consent from the parent and/or guardian prior to departing from the service?
- What procedures and strategies are in place to ensure a regular headcount is taken to ensure all children and staff are present? Who is responsible to ensure this is carried out?
- How are any additional weather-related risks posed to the journey with a change in weather are considered prior to the outing? For example, rain may pose an increased risk in visibility when crossing roads, wet ground may increase slip risk.
- How are external environmental factors which may pose an increased risk considered? This may include time of the day, traffic, elevated surfaces, animals, debris/broken glass and/or anti-social behaviour?
- How are children appropriately supervised at all times while using the toilet? Are there nappy changing facilities?
- Are there any specific food requirements? Taking into account individual allergies and preferences?
- If walking, what strategies will be in place to ensure the safety of the children? Will children be visible? Are Hi-Viz jackets required for children and staff? Are there positive strategies in place to keep children safe for example, pairing of children, holding onto a walking rope, singing songs?

QMS Reference	EYI-GDE12.36
Version	V2.0
Date	12/12/2025