



A Guide to Childcare and Play Provision in the School Holidays

What is available for my children in the school holidays?

Most children look forward to the school holidays, but for working parents the school holidays can be a difficult time to find childcare. Non working parents may well benefit from a break as well. Children can often find themselves at a loose end in the holidays and welcome opportunities for good quality play with their peers.

In Sheffield there is a variety of provision for the school holidays which aims to meet some of these needs:

Holiday playcare

Holiday playcare schemes provide group childcare and play for children during the school holidays. Out of school clubs may also provide schemes as part of their service while others will just run during the holidays. They are aimed at working parents and operate for the working day, usually between 8.00am and 6.00pm though this can vary widely. There are more schemes open during the summer and Easter holidays, though there is some provision available for every school holiday and half term.

Most holiday playcare schemes will take children from 4 or 5 years old up to about 11 or 12 years. Some schemes based in nurseries will take children from 3 years old, often up to 8 years. Some schemes concentrate on primary school age children, while others will only take children aged 8 and over and will take children up to 15 or 16.

As a rule all holiday playcare which includes children under 8 years old and runs for more than 2 hours a day more than 14 times a year has to be registered on the compulsory part of the Ofsted Childcare Register (or the Early Years Register if they take children under 5).

Holiday playcare aimed at children of 8 years old or over does not need to be registered, but should be expected to be working to similar standards as registered groups. Clubs aimed at children of 8 and over have the option of registering on the voluntary part of the Ofsted Childcare Register. Registration will mean that certain standards of care have been met and that all staff have been checked through the Criminal Records Bureau. For more information on Ofsted please ask for the factsheet, 'A guide to registration and Ofsted'.

Holiday playcare schemes operate with a 'contract of care' between parents and staff. Children are booked onto the scheme and are looked after until picked up by their parent or carer.

Sports Camps

Sports camps provide holiday playcare giving children an opportunity to take part in a wide range of different sports. They are generally Ofsted registered and run mainly in the summer and Easter holidays.

Visit First Point 8.30am to 5.30pm or ring us on 275 6699

8am to 6pm Monday to Friday.

First Point is in the city centre at Howden House, Union Street - close to the Peace Gardens.

www.sheffield.gov.uk/firstpoint www.asksid.net

Community Playschemes

These playschemes operate primarily for the benefit of children in a local area and often run with the involvement of parents. They may also be registered with Ofsted and operate a 'contract of care' with parents.

Open access playschemes

Open access playschemes provide play based activities for children, mainly during the summer holidays. These are usually aimed at children older than the early years age group. The children are supervised while they attend the playscheme, but are free to come and go when they like, with no 'contract of care' with the parent. They vary how long they open for and are not suitable as childcare for working parents. Children under 8 may need to be accompanied by an adult. Open access schemes for children over 5 years 11 months are not required to register with Ofsted.

Park based schemes

These are schemes running mainly in the summer to offer additional supervised sports or play activities in a park or other outdoor area. These will usually operate for a few hours at a time and children and parents or carers will be free to come and go as they like. Children under 8 may need to be accompanied by an adult.

What will my child do in a holiday playscheme?

Children should be provided with a range of safe and stimulating activities to choose from, with the emphasis firmly on fun and play. These will include sports, group games, arts and crafts, outdoor and adventurous play, drama and trips out.

How do you choose a holiday playscheme?

Give yourself plenty of time to choose a suitable playscheme as places can get booked up early. Look for a service you think will suit your child and visit the club with your child first. Check opening times, dates and costs. You may want to speak to other parents whose children use the playscheme.

Points to consider:

- Do the children look like they are enjoying themselves?
- Are the staff friendly and approachable? How do they relate to the children?
- Do staff have any childcare qualifications? (In playschemes registered on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register at least half the staff should be qualified)
- Is there a wide range of activities on offer and are children involved in planning?
- Are the premises safe, clean and secure and is there enough space to play, including outdoor space?
- Are there enough toys, books and play equipment? Do they take into account the children's ages, cultural backgrounds, and any special needs?
- Are there children your child's age?
- Are parents provided with information about the club's policies and procedures, e.g. for outings, medical emergencies etc?

How much will a holiday playscheme cost?

Prices vary from scheme to scheme and will depend on the type of care and activities offered, and on how much funding the scheme can access. Holiday playcare schemes range from around £20 to £45 per day, with an average of about £25 per day. Some schemes are low cost with places subsidised according to income. Many open access playschemes are low cost or free of charge and most of the park based schemes are free of charge.

If the scheme is registered, those parents who are eligible will be able to claim the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit. Using a registered provider will also enable parents to use employer supported childcare vouchers or directly contracted childcare.

How can children with special needs access holiday playschemes?

Under the Requirements for the Ofsted Childcare Register (compulsory and voluntary) registered playschemes must ensure that the childcare is accessible and inclusive, taking all reasonable steps to ensure children with disabilities have access to the premises and are not treated less favourably than other children. Holiday playschemes can also be used for respite care.

The Special Needs Inclusion Playcare Service (SNIPS) can provide support to enable children with disabilities to access mainstream holiday playschemes. See useful contacts and information.

Sheffield Information Link provide a specialist information service for families with children who are disabled or have special needs. The service called SIGN can provide information on services, support and specific conditions and disabilities and has an enquiry line. For details see 'Useful contacts' section below.

Other Activities and Children's Events

There are many family events and activities for children and young people run in the school holidays, especially in the summer. Visit the Sheffield Information Link website to download our free **What's On** guide for each school holiday and our useful **Places to Visit** booklet. A lot of these activities can also be accessed via our online directory: www.asksid.net.

Useful contacts and information

Sheffield Information Link

Tel: (0114) 249 8271 (out of hours answerphone)

9 Leopold Street, Sheffield, S1 2GY

Email: info@sheffinfoolink.org.uk

Website: www.sheffinfoolink.org.uk

Sheffield's Family Information Service. Additional support for families requiring childcare and other services for children and young people in Sheffield.

SIGN (Sheffield Information Giving Network)

Tel: (0114) 266 9476 (out of hours answerphone)

Ryegate Children's Centre, Tupton Crescent Road, Sheffield, S10 5DD

Email: sign@sheffinfoolink.org.uk

Monday – Friday 10.00am – 3.00pm, drop in and phone service

Free information for parents and carers with children or young people with special needs or disabilities.

Special Needs Inclusion Playcare Service (SNIPS)

Tel (0114) 273 4017

Castle Market Building, Floor 1, Exchange Street, Sheffield, S1 2AH

Email: CYPDsnips@sheffield.gov.uk

Website: www.sheffield.gov.uk

For information and support for children with disabilities or special needs to access playschemes.

Families may self-refer

Activity Sheffield

Tel (0114) 273 4266

Email: activity.sheffield@sheffield.gov.uk

Website: www.sheffield.gov.uk/activitysheffield

For information on open access playschemes and park based schemes.

Out of School Network (OSN)

6 – 8 Meetinghouse Lane, Sheffield, S1 2DP

Tel: (0114) 249 4941

Email: info@osn.org.uk

Website: www.osn.org.uk

Provides support and advice for out of school clubs and holiday playschemes and helps schemes to set up.

OFSTED

Tel: 0300 123 1231 – Helpline (Monday – Friday 8.00am – 6.45pm)

Tel: 0300 123 4666 – Complaints and Concerns

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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