



A Guide to Out of School Clubs

What is an out of school club?

These are sometimes called 'kids' clubs' or 'after school clubs'. They provide care for school age children (with some exceptions) usually after, and sometimes before, school hours (these are sometimes called breakfast clubs).

This kind of care is available during term time but some out of school schemes provide holiday playcare during the school holidays as well. Out of school clubs are often based in schools but are also run by some day nurseries. Clubs usually take children from particular schools, and some include school collection, so they are not open access. Most clubs which care for children under 8 years old for more than 2 hours a day are required to be on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register with Ofsted. This depends on circumstances e.g. length and the time they operate. They can also be on the voluntary part of the Childcare Register if caring for children over 8 and over 2 hours a day.

Parents and carers may also be eligible for financial help towards childcare costs by claiming the childcare element of the Working Tax Credit. Alternatively employer supported childcare vouchers may also be used. For more information please ask for factsheets on these.

What will the children do at an out of school club?

Children are able to learn and play in a safe environment at an out of school club. They benefit from the company of their friends and the opportunity to participate in a range of stimulating activities. These can include sports, arts, crafts, drama, games or quiet reading. Clubs aim to help children develop their full potential through positive social, emotional, physical and intellectual experiences

How do you choose an out of school club?

Look for a service you think would be suitable for your child. You may want to visit the club with your child first. Is there a friendly and welcoming atmosphere and do the children there look happy? There are things you might want to observe and questions you may want to ask on your visit:

Points to consider

- How many children attend the club?
- Do the children look happy and busy?
- Is the club registered? Ofsted registration and public liability insurance certificates should be displayed, if not you can ask to see them.
- Are staff friendly and approachable? How do they relate to the children?
- What are the staffing ratios? These will be set for registered groups. Are there volunteers and are they properly supervised?

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

- Is there a key worker for your child, and are staff qualified? (In registered clubs all supervisors and managers must hold a relevant level 3 qualification, with half the remaining staff holding a relevant level 2 qualification.)
- Are there planned activities and are children involved in planning?
- Are the premises secure, warm, clean, light and well ventilated?
- Is there enough space for the children to play?
- Are there enough toys, books and play equipment provided?
- Do the toys and activities take into account the children's ages, cultural backgrounds and any special needs?
- Is there a safe, supervised outdoor play area that is kept secure?
- Does the club have a procedure for school collection?
- Are parents provided with information about the club's policies and procedures, e.g. for outings and medical emergencies?
- Speak to other parents whose children attend the club

Quality Improvements

Those who look after children, whether offering childcare, early education or playcare are encouraged to ensure their services reach a quality standard, above basic requirements. There are a number of recognised awards and you may wish to check whether a provider has one.

Does your child have a special need or disability?

The Special Needs Inclusion Playcare Service (SNIPS) can provide support to enable children with disabilities to access mainstream out of school clubs. Sheffield Information Link provides a specialist information service for families with children who are disabled or have special needs. The service, which is called SIGN, can provide information on services, support and specific conditions and disabilities. SIGN has an enquiry line. For details see 'Useful contacts' section at the end.

How much does an out of school club cost?

Most clubs charge on a sessional basis. Costs can be between £2 and £7 for a morning session and between £3 and £11 for an afternoon session. Clubs offering holiday playcare charge between £4 and £36 for a full day. This wide range of costs is mainly dependent on funding at the club for subsidised places. Other factors affecting the price may be that it includes breakfast, tea, snacks and school drop offs/pick ups. Some clubs that offer these facilities may charge an additional fee whereas others will include these in the basic cost. Some providers may also offer discounts for siblings or block bookings.

How do you settle your child?

Visit the club with your child and maybe stay with them the first few times they attend. Talk to staff at the club and find out if your child has a key worker. Consider whether the activities on offer at the club are of interest to your child and help to get them engaged.

What to do if you are not happy with the club

Discuss any difficulties with staff at the club as soon as they arise. The club must have a complaints procedure which you could follow. If you are unable to resolve your difficulties and they relate to the quality of care being provided, you can contact Ofsted (see useful contacts on next page).

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, Tapton 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.

Out of School Network (OSN)

Tel: (0114) 249 4941

Floor 2, 6 – 8 Meetinghouse Lane, Sheffield, S1 2DP

Email: info@osn.org.uk

Website: www.osn.org.uk

Monday – Thursday 8.30am – 4.30pm, Friday 8.30am – 4.00pm

Provides support and advice for out of school clubs and helps clubs set up.

Ofsted

Tel: 0300 123 1231 - Helpline

Tel: 0300 123 4666 – Complaints and Concerns

Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

For documents on registration requirements and reports on registered provision.

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