



Sheffield
Information
Link

FACTSHEET

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 our factsheets.

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?
- 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.



www.sheffinfolink.org.uk

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. SIL 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 is based at the Ryegate Children's Centre and has an enquiry line. For details see 'Useful contacts' section on the reverse.

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 below).

Useful contacts and information



Sheffield Information Link

Sheffield's Family Information Service.
11 Leopold Street, Sheffield,
S1 2GY

Tel: (0114) 275 6699
Text phone: (0114) 249 4939
Email: info@sheffinfolink.org.uk
www.sheffinfolink.org.uk

Drop-in Service & Library Opening Hours:
Mon: 9.30am to 5.30pm, Wed: 9.30am to 6.00pm,
Fri: 9.30am to 4.00pm

Telephone service available daily.
Out of hours answerphone.

SIGN Information Service

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

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

Monday – Friday 10.00am – 1.00pm,
drop in and phone service

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

Email: sign@sheffinfolink.org.uk

Ofsted

Tel: 0845 640 4040 - Helpline and Complaints
Email: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Out of School Network (OSN)

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

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

Tel: (0114) 249 4941
Email: info@osn.org.uk
Website: www.osn.org.uk

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



This Factsheet is available in other formats upon request, please call 0114 275 6699 for more details.

© Sheffield Information Link 2010. May not be reproduced without permission. We try to ensure the accuracy of information in this factsheet but this cannot be guaranteed.