Make it Mentoring
Specialists in support for young people and families

MAKE IT MENTORING

Outings and Visits Policy

Version and Review Details

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1. Introduction

Make It Mentoring (MiM) recognises that outings and visits form an important part of mentoring, providing opportunities for children, young people and adults to develop confidence, independence, social skills and life experiences.

Outings may include everyday community activities, recreational visits, organised group activities and visits to specific venues. These may take place as part of individual mentoring arrangements or as planned group activities.

The safety and welfare of all mentees and staff must remain the primary consideration when planning and undertaking any outing or visit. While some activities naturally involve an element of risk, appropriate planning, individual risk assessments and suitable supervision help ensure that risks are identified, minimised and managed effectively.

This policy applies to all MiM employees undertaking outings and visits as part of their work.

2. Initial Planning and Authorisation

All outings and visits must be planned with consideration given to the individual needs, abilities and circumstances of the mentees involved. The individual mentee risk assessment and care plan must be the starting point when considering whether an activity or visit is appropriate.

Planning should consider:

The suitability of the activity for the individual or group.
Any identified risks or specific support requirements.
The location, accessibility and suitability of the venue.
Staffing and supervision requirements.
Transport arrangements.
Costs and available funding.
Emergency arrangements and contact details.
Where appropriate, mentees should be involved in planning activities. This encourages participation, choice and independence and helps them understand expectations around behaviour and safety.

Staff must ensure that they understand their responsibilities and are familiar with the relevant risk assessments before undertaking an activity.

Activities involving additional or unusual risks must be discussed with and authorised by a MiM manager before arrangements are confirmed.

3. Staffing Ratios and Supervision

MiM's default staffing arrangement for outings and activities is one mentor to one mentee.

However, individual care plans and risk assessments may identify a requirement for two mentors to support one mentee or specify other supervision arrangements. The staffing requirements identified within the individual risk assessment and care plan must always be followed.

Staff must maintain appropriate supervision throughout the activity, taking account of the mentee's age, level of independence, understanding of risk and individual support needs.

Where group activities are organised, staffing levels must be appropriate to the number of participants, their individual needs and the nature of the activity.

Staff must not make informal changes to agreed staffing arrangements without first consulting a manager.

4. Costings and Funding

The cost of an outing or activity should be considered before any arrangements are confirmed.

Staff should establish the likely costs, including:

Transport and fuel costs.
Entrance fees and activity charges.
Clothing or equipment required.
Refreshments and meals.
Any additional costs associated with individual support needs.
Activities should be planned with consideration for accessibility and affordability. Where costs exceed the agreed mentee activity allocation, approval must be obtained from the relevant line manager before any commitment is made.

5. Information and Consent

Written parental consent is obtained at the beginning of mentoring arrangements, outlining the general types of activities that may be undertaken as part of the service.

Where an activity involves additional or specific risks, or represents a significant change to the usual arrangements, parents or carers must be informed and further consent obtained where appropriate.

For adult mentees, their own informed consent must be sought, with appropriate support provided to enable them to understand the proposed activity and make decisions.

Staff must ensure that:

Relevant emergency contact information is available.
Any medical, dietary or accessibility requirements have been considered.
Parents or carers are informed of significant changes to agreed arrangements.
Photography permissions are checked before photographs are taken or shared.
The wishes, preferences and individual circumstances of mentees should be respected throughout the planning process.

6. Pre-Event Visits

Where a new venue or activity is being considered, a pre-event visit should be undertaken wherever reasonably practicable. This is particularly important where there are identifiable risks, unfamiliar environments or specific accessibility requirements.

A pre-event visit can help establish:

The suitability and accessibility of the venue.
Potential hazards and any necessary precautions.
Facilities available, including toilets and changing facilities.
Emergency exits and evacuation arrangements.
Parking and transport arrangements.
Any specific requirements imposed by the venue.
Where a pre-event visit is not possible, staff should obtain sufficient information about the venue and activity to inform their risk assessment and planning.

7. Risk Assessments

MiM maintains generic risk assessments for a range of commonly undertaken activities and visits. These must be considered alongside each mentee's individual risk assessment, which identifies their specific needs, vulnerabilities and support requirements.

Individual risk assessments are held electronically within the mentee's service user file on CarePlanner.

Before undertaking an outing or visit, staff must ensure that:

The activity is appropriate for the mentee.
Relevant individual risks have been considered.
Any additional activity-specific risks have been identified.
Appropriate control measures are in place.
Staffing and supervision arrangements are suitable.
Where a commercial provider or venue is involved, staff should establish what safety arrangements and risk assessments are in place. Provider information should be considered as part of MiM's own planning and risk assessment process.

Risk assessments must be reviewed where circumstances change, following an incident or where new risks are identified.

8. Transport Arrangements

Where staff use their own vehicles to transport mentees, they must ensure that:

Their vehicle is roadworthy and appropriately maintained.
They hold a valid driving licence.
Their vehicle insurance provides appropriate cover for transporting mentees in connection with their employment.
Seatbelts are worn by all passengers.
Appropriate child restraints are used where legally required.
The number of passengers does not exceed the vehicle's permitted capacity.
Staff must follow agreed collection and drop-off arrangements and ensure that mentees are safely handed over to the appropriate parent, carer or responsible person where applicable.

Any changes to transport arrangements must be communicated to the relevant people. Staff must never use a mobile phone while driving and must not drive if they are unfit to do so.

9. Insurance

MiM must ensure that appropriate insurance arrangements are in place for its activities and visits.

Where commercial providers are used, staff should establish that appropriate insurance and safety arrangements are maintained by the provider.

Any uncertainty regarding insurance cover for a proposed activity must be referred to a MiM manager before the activity takes place.

10. First Aid and Medical Needs

Staff must be aware of any relevant medical conditions, allergies, medication requirements or other health-related needs before undertaking an outing.

Individual mentors carry first aid kits in their vehicles, which should be appropriately stocked and accessible.

Where group activities take place, suitable first aid arrangements must be identified in advance. Any designated first aider must hold an appropriate and current qualification.

Staff must know how to access emergency medical assistance and contact emergency services where necessary.

Any first aid administered must be recorded and reported to the relevant manager. Parents or carers must be informed where appropriate, particularly where an injury, illness or medical intervention has occurred.

11. Safeguarding and Staff Responsibilities

Staff remain responsible for the safety and welfare of mentees throughout an outing or visit. All staff must maintain appropriate professional boundaries and follow MiM's safeguarding policies and procedures.

Staff must:

Maintain the agreed level of supervision.
Be aware of their surroundings and potential safeguarding risks.
Follow the individual mentee's risk assessment and care plan.

Treat all mentees with dignity, respect and consideration.
Ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for toilet visits and personal care where relevant.
Report any safeguarding concerns or disclosures in accordance with MiM's Safeguarding Policy.
If a mentee becomes separated from the group or goes missing, staff must take immediate action to establish their whereabouts and ensure their safety. The police and emergency services must be contacted where necessary, and the DSL or a manager informed without delay.

12. Incidents and Accidents

Any accident, injury, illness or significant incident occurring during an outing must be dealt with promptly and appropriately.

Staff must:

Take immediate steps to protect the safety and welfare of everyone involved.
Obtain medical assistance or contact emergency services where required.
Inform a MiM manager as soon as possible.
Inform parents or carers where appropriate.
Complete the relevant incident or accident report.
Upload the completed documentation to CarePlanner.
Where an incident raises safeguarding concerns, the DSL must also be informed in accordance with MiM's safeguarding procedures.

Following an incident, consideration must be given to whether the individual's risk assessment, care plan or future activity arrangements require review.

13. Emergency Procedures

Emergency arrangements should be considered during the planning stage, particularly for activities involving unfamiliar venues, larger groups or adventurous activities.

In the event of an emergency, staff must prioritise the safety and welfare of mentees and other individuals present.

Where appropriate, staff should:

Contact emergency services immediately.
Follow the venue's emergency and evacuation procedures.
Ensure that all mentees and staff are accounted for.
Inform a MiM manager as soon as practicable.
Contact parents or carers where appropriate.
Record the circumstances and actions taken.
Where an incident involves serious injury, significant safeguarding concerns or potential criminal activity, staff must follow management and safeguarding instructions.

Staff should not speculate about the cause of an incident, admit liability or provide information to external parties or the media on behalf of MiM.

A full written record must be completed following any significant incident.

14. Monitoring and Review

MiM will monitor the implementation of this policy through management oversight, review of risk assessments, incident reporting and feedback from staff and mentees.

The policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier where changes in legislation, guidance, organisational practice or identified risks make this necessary.