

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR SOHAM HOLIDAY SCHEME (referred to hereafter as the 'Holiday Scheme')

Fire Procedures

If you discover a fire, sound the alarm immediately. The assembly point is the grass area alongside the Lode Centre. Reporting your findings to the Appointed Fire Officer, Tracy Gordon or her deputy Penny Minns. Begin evacuating the building immediately and direct the children and parent helpers to the assembly point. A register will be taken of all people known to be in the building. The Fire Officer will take charge and decide if the situation requires guidance from the Fire Brigade.

Child Protection

We will respond appropriately to suspicions of abuse. Changes in a child's behaviour/appearance will be investigated or if a child confides in a Holiday Scheme helper, their words will be taken seriously and acted upon appropriately. Their Parents will normally be the first point of reference, though suspicions will also be referred as appropriate to the Social Services Department. All such suspicions and investigations will be kept confidential and shared only with those who need to know. The people most commonly involved will be the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Holiday Scheme and the person who first referred the situation to them. Whenever worrying changes are observed in a child's behaviour, physical condition or appearance, or if a child entrusts sensitive information to a Holiday Scheme helper, a specific and confidential record will be set up. If a complaint is made against an adult in the Holiday Scheme, then it should be referred to the Chairman in the first instance.

Our designed Child Protection Officer is Sarah Cawthorne.

Equal Opportunities

Soham Holiday Scheme is open to every child between the ages of 5 and 11 who wish to attend. Children under the age of five are welcome, but a parent or adult must accompany them and be responsible for them. The Holiday Scheme recognises that many different types of family successfully love and care for children and we work in accordance with all the relevant legislation including:

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975
The Disability Discrimination Act 1995
The Human Rights Act 1998
The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

Special Needs

Our Holiday Scheme aims to provide a welcome environment and appropriate opportunities for all children. Children with special needs, like all other children, are admitted to the Holiday Scheme after consultation with parents. However, it is important to point out that the Holiday Scheme is a voluntarily run organisation and does not have access to specialist support or one-to-one workers so therefore if a child's needs cannot be met by the Holiday Scheme's voluntary staff alone, parents and other carers for the said child may be required to attend the Holiday Scheme while the child is present.

Staff

The Holiday Scheme is run by a group of committed and responsible parents and carers, not by child caring professionals. The committee which includes a chair, vice chair, treasurer and secretary as well as bookings/activities officers are backed by as many as 20 parent helpers during each Holiday Scheme session (and no less than 10) some of whom, by coincidence, often have professional child caring status such as registered childminders, teachers, classroom assistants and learning support assistants. Anyone who is alone with children at any given time will have been police checked and anyone offering assistance at Holiday Scheme on a regular basis will be encouraged to apply for enhanced disclosure. Those refusing to do so will not be allowed to help.

Parent helpers will be aware of what is expected of them whilst on site, know where things are kept, the routine of the day, what to do in an emergency and whose in charge on a day-to-day basis.

Safety

The safety of children is of paramount importance. In order to ensure the safety of both children and adults, the Holiday Scheme will ensure that:

- A book is available at each session for the reporting of any accident/incident which the parent or the person assigned to collecting the child will sign on collection to say they are aware the accident occurred. Accident records will be kept securely locked away and confidentiality will be maintained in line with the Data Protection Act. Wherever possible St Johns Ambulance will be in attendance.
- Any medications such as asthma inhalers are kept in a locked box.
- Details of children's allergies and medical conditions are kept on file along with details of their GP and how to contact them. Parents are responsible for notifying the Holiday Scheme of any conditions/allergies.
- All adults, including parents, are aware of the system in operation for the children's arrivals and departures. Each child is booked in with the relevant Booking Officer for their school.
- Parents sign their child out on collect and if they will not be the person collecting their child, they inform the Holiday Scheme. The Holiday Scheme will not allow a child to go home with anyone other than their parent unless they have been informed by the parent.
- An adult is always on the door to book children in and out of the Lode Centre to enable them to travel to other areas used by the Holiday Scheme such as the Ross Peers Sports Centre, St Andrews School and Soham Village College.
- Due to booking in and out, the person on the door knows where each child is at any given time.
- Children are accompanied to and from other areas such as the Ross Peers Sports Centre, St Andrews School and Soham Village College by at least one adult.
- The small portion of car park between the Lode Centre entrance and the entrance into the Ross Peers Sports Centre is coned off to vehicles.
- Fire exits are kept clear.
- Outdoor space is fenced off and/or supervised.
- A register of adults is completed as people arrive so that a complete record of those present is available in an emergency. Adults will then sign out when they leave.
- Parents' contact numbers are kept on record (if those numbers change or parents are likely to be unavailable, it is up to parents to offer alternative contact details).
- Contact details of the Person in charge on a day-to-day basis is available.
- Children are never left alone with adults who are paid to give or have voluntarily offered a service to the Holiday Scheme (for example a children's entertainer, archer etc). A Holiday Scheme helper will always be present too.
- Swimming will be supervised by a professional with recognised qualifications in that particular field. Daily risk assessments are done and the appropriate insurance cover is in place.
- The premises are checked before leaving at the end of the day/session.
- The Holiday Scheme operates a No Smoking Policy.

Behaviour

We believe that children flourish in an ordered environment in which everyone knows what is expected of them and where they are free to develop their play and learning without fear of being hindered by anyone else. We aim for a situation in which children develop self-discipline and self-esteem in an atmosphere of mutual respect and encouragement.

In order to achieve this, when children behave in an unacceptable way, we never use physical punishment such as smacking or shaking and children will never be sent out of the room by themselves. Techniques intended to humiliate children will also not be used. Adults will not use their voices in a threatening way. Where appropriate, calm will be achieved by a period of 'time out' with an adult on the Holiday Scheme committee.

Any behaviour problems will be handled in a developmentally appropriate fashion, respecting individual children's levels of understanding and maturity. Adults will be aware that some kinds of behaviour may arise from a child's special needs. If behaviour is too difficult for the Holiday Scheme to handle, a child's parents will be contacted and the situation discussed. Support can be sought from the Childcare and Playwork Team within the Early Years and Childcare Service.

Bullying

The Holiday Scheme is committed to providing an environment for children that is safe, welcoming and free from bullying. Bullying of any form is unacceptable at our Holiday Scheme, whether the offender is a child or an adult. The victim is never responsible for being the target of bullying.

Everyone involved in the Holiday Scheme, committee members, children and parent/carers, will be made aware of the Holiday Scheme's stance towards bullying. Such behaviour will not be tolerated or excused under any circumstances.

The Holiday Scheme defines bullying as the repeated harassment of others through emotional, physical, verbal or psychological abuse. Examples of such behaviour are as follows:

Emotional: Being deliberately unkind, shunning or excluding another person from a group or tormenting them. For example, forcing another person to be 'left out' of a game or activity, passing notes about others or making fun of another person.

Physical: Pushing, scratching, spitting, kicking, hitting, biting, taking or damaging belongings, tripping up, punching or using any other sort of violence against another person.

Verbal: Name-calling, put-downs, ridiculing or using words to attack, threaten or insult. For example, spreading rumours or making fun of another person's appearance.

Psychological: Behaviour likely to instil a sense of fear or anxiety in another person.

Procedure for a lost/missing child

If it is suspected that a child has become lost or missing, the nominated person in charge will be made aware and a search party will be assembled. A full register will be taken and an immediate detailed search of the lode centre, sports centre, gyms and surroundings will be undertaken. As one area is searched it will then be locked to ensure the child could not re-enter that building. If after searching the child can still not be found, then the parent/carer as indicated on the booking form will be notified. If the child can still not be found then the police will be notified and their advice sought.

Procedure for an uncollected child

If a child has not been collected from the Soham Holiday Scheme by the pre-determined time, at least 2 members of the committee/volunteers will stay with the child at the Lode Centre for 30 minutes whilst attempts are made to contact the parent/carer as indicated on the booking form. If after 30 minutes they have not been able to contact the parent/carer, then the child will be taken by the Officer-in-Charge to the Ross Peers Sports Centre to await collection and further attempts will be made to contact the parent/carer. If they are still not able to contact them, after a further hour then the police will be notified and their advice sought.

Complaints Procedure

The committee of the Soham Holiday Scheme will attempt to deal with any complaints promptly and fairly. A written record of the complaint will be maintained and be available to committee members and the parents making the complaint. We will endeavour to resolve the complaint within 48 hours and will advise the parents of any ongoing enquiries in writing. Any action required will be reviewed and again the parents will be kept informed in writing.

**This policy was revised by the Soham Holiday Scheme on 17th July 2009.
Signed on behalf of the Soham Holiday Scheme.**

Tracy Gordon (Chairman)

Penny Minns (Vice Chairman).....