

Choosing an Out-of-School Club

When you are looking for childcare for your child, Walsall FIS understands that it is a difficult decision.

To help you we have put together a guide to helping you choose the best provision for you and your children.

If you are considering using an out-of-school club then this fact sheet gives tips and hints on what to look for and what to ask.

Firstly is an out-of-school club for you? An out-of-school club maybe for you if:

- You want your child to be cared for in an environment that is familiar to them
- You want your child to mix with other children of all ages
- You only want to drop your child off at one place

If an out-of-school club only cares for children aged over 8 or operates for less than 2 hours then it doesn't need to be registered. If it is registered with Ofsted then you maybe able to claim help with the costs. Please speak to a team member for more details.

If you decide that an out-of-school club is for you the first thing you need to do is establish which out-of-school clubs are available if your child doesn't attend the school its based at and have vacancies to meet your needs.

The information that Walsall FIS hold about vacancies and admissions is only ever a guide and we would always recommend that you contact them directly for up to date details.

Once you have established which clubs maybe able to meet you needs, we would always suggest arranging a visit to meet them, preferably more that once and at different times of the day. When you go to see them, if possible, take your child with you.

When you visit the out-of-school club you may want to look for the following:

- Are you and your child made to feel welcome?
Do the staff interact with your child?
- Do the other children look happy?
Are they interacting with each other?
- How do the staff interact with the children?
Do they have a good relationship?
- Do you like the venue? Is it big enough, clean, etc?
- What toys, books and equipment are available?
- Is there an outside area, if so, what is it like? Is there enough space for your child? If there isn't a garden, what local facilities are available?



Choosing an Out-of-School Club (continued)

Questions you may wish to ask on your visit:

- Does the club need to be registered with Ofsted? If so can I see the certificate and report?
- How long have you been operating? How long have the staff been here?
- Have they done any extra training? Including a current paediatric first aid qualification? Can I see the certificates?
- Can I have phone numbers for parents you work for that I can contact for references?
- Do you collect or drop off from other schools?
- What other children will be with child? What are their ages?
- Do you offer a trial run to see how things work out?
- How much do you charge?
- How do you cater for special needs/disabilities?

Remember – trust your gut. If you don't think a club is right for you and your child, you don't have to use them.

Ratios

Out-of-school clubs should have a minimum of 2 staff on duty at any time, 1 of whom should be qualified. There should be 1 qualified member of staff to each group of 8 children.

The leader must have a minimum of an NVQ Level 3 and at least 50% of the rest of the staff must have a minimum of NVQ Level 2, all must be in relevant subjects.

Arranging childcare

Walsall FIS would always recommend that you have a contract with your provider so that you both know what is expected. This contract should cover hours, pay, sickness, holiday pay, notice of cancellation period.

You should also agree things such as discipline, what happens in an emergency and anything else that is important to you. You should always agree this beforehand.

Settling your child in

Please see our separate factsheet on this. There should be one enclosed in this information pack. If there isn't please contact Walsall FIS.

I'm not happy with my out-of-school club – What should I do?

If you are not happy with the club for any reason, we would always recommend talking to them first. It maybe just a misunderstanding of what is expected from both parties and can be easily cleared up.

If this is not the case then please contact Walsall FIS on 01922 653383. All out-of-school clubs have an Information Officer and Improvement Officer who can offer advice on concerns.

Alternatively if you are concerned for a child's welfare then you should contact Ofsted on 0845 601 4771.

