



Supervision in Primary School playgrounds outwith the school day

Guidance for schools

It is generally the case that the start and end of the school day – when classes are taken in and when they leave at the end of the day – define the period of time for which a school has responsibility for supervising all children attending school that day.

There are exceptions to this:

- For those children who are transported to school by the local authority, primary schools provide a level of supervision from the time the bus/taxi arrives at the school until the children board the transport at the end of the school day. A level of supervision is provided for those children from the time their transport arrives at the school in the morning until they enter class at the start of the school day. The detail of this supervision varies dependent on the specific context of the school. However, for pupils who pay to use a school bus, no supervision is provided.
- Children attending an extra-curricular club after school are supervised for the duration of that club only and are expected, dependent on age and according to their parent's wishes, to be collected or to go home themselves when the club finishes.

Some schools do make additional exceptions to the ones noted above, for reasons specific to that school's particular context.

Supervision in the playground before the school day

It is the case that (other than for transported children) most of our schools do NOT provide supervision in the playground before the start of the school day.

Whilst children attending a breakfast club may be allowed to go out to 'play' after they have eaten, the guidance for breakfast clubs is that parents will first have given written permission on the basis that there is no supervision provided.

Given that most schools do not provide supervision until the start of the school day, to ensure the safety and wellbeing of pupils in the playground it would often be the case that a school sets a time, in consultation with the Parent Council, before which children should not arrive in the playground; the exact 'not before' time will vary according to a school's specific local circumstances but is likely to vary between 8.30 and 8.45 a.m.

Although children (other than transported children) are not supervised in the time they spend in the playground between the 'not before time' e.g. 8.40 a.m. and 'the start of the school day' e.g. 9.00 a.m. if required emergency support such as First Aid would be available from staff in school.

Information as to the 'not before' time for a specific school should be shared on the school's website, in the handbook for parents, at enrolment and at induction events. It will also be helpful to ensure parents understand that it will generally be the case that children are not brought in to school until the official start of the school day. In reality of course, in the event of severe weather (e.g. very heavy rain) or a critical incident, a senior member of staff may take a decision to allow the children to enter school a few minutes earlier than would usually be the case.

Supervision in the playground at the end of the school day

Children who are transported to and from school by the Authority are supervised until they board their bus/taxi home.

For all other children it is generally the case that once their class is dismissed, or their after-school activity club has finished, they collect their belongings from the cloakroom and leave the school building at which point they are no longer supervised by school staff but are collected, attend a Kids Club on the premises or make their way home according to their parent's wishes. Where a child lingers in the school grounds after the end of the school day, for example to use a trim trail, no supervision is provided.

Occasionally, due to unusual circumstances and at the headteacher's discretion, a school may agree to a specific individual agreement with a particular parent to supervise a child for a limited period of time beyond the end of the formal school day. This would require to be reviewed after an agreed period of time.