



RECREATION AND ACTIVITY POLICY

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1. Introduction to the Policy

This policy sets out the framework, principles, and procedures that **Byram House** follows to ensure that children and young people in our care have access to a wide range of recreational and activity opportunities, commensurate with their age, understanding, and assessed needs. The policy applies to all staff, agency workers, volunteers, and contractors involved in planning, supervising, or accompanying children on activities, holidays, or overnight stays.

The Home is Byram House, which comprises the two residences at 62 Deighton Road and 66 Deighton Road. This policy applies equally across both residences.

Byram House is committed to making sure that all children and young people receive the same recreation and activity opportunities as their peers, whilst keeping them safe. We will identify and provide appropriate opportunities for children to develop themselves in accordance with their wishes and feelings, and as part of the home's plan for their care.

Children and young people must be provided with the opportunity to take risks proportionate to their age, level of understanding, and in light of risk assessments.

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Comply with the **Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 (Regulation 23 – Health and Wellbeing)** and the **Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004 (as amended)** .
- Ensure that all activities, holidays, and overnight stays are properly planned, risk assessed, and authorised.
- Involve children in planning their own recreation and activities.
- Safeguard children from harm during activities, including appropriate supervision, ratios, and emergency procedures.
- Provide clear guidance on parental consent, delegated authority, and overnight stays with friends or relatives.

2. How this Policy Benefits the Home

This Recreation and Activity Policy benefits Byram House in the following ways:

- **Legal Compliance** – It meets duties under the **Children’s Homes Regulations 2015**, the **Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations**, the **Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974**, and **Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026**.
- **Child Development** – It ensures children have fun, build friendships, and develop life skills through a range of activities.
- **Risk Management** – It requires robust risk assessments, staffing ratios, emergency plans, and checks on external providers.
- **Clarity for Staff** – It sets out approval processes for activities, holidays, overnight stays, and use of equipment (e.g., hot tubs, play equipment).
- **Parental and Social Worker Involvement** – It clarifies consent requirements and the delegation of authority for routine activities.
- **Inspection Readiness** – The **Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) 2026** expects the home to promote enjoyment and achievement. This policy provides clear evidence.
- **Training Framework** – It sets out annual training for staff on risk assessment, supervision, and outdoor activity safety.

3. Definitions & Legislation

3.1 Definitions

Term	Definition
Home	Byram House, comprising 62 Deighton Road and 66 Deighton Road.
Company	IMS Care LTD.

Byram House	The name used throughout this policy to refer to the home and its staff.
Activity Plan	A document detailing planned activities, including risk assessment, staffing ratios, emergency procedures, and consent.
Adventurous Activity	An activity listed under the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations (caving, trekking, mountaineering, water sports).
Delegated Authority	Authority given to the home (by the placing authority or parent) to make day-to-day decisions about routine activities.
Overnight Stay	Any period where a child sleeps away from the home (with family, friends, or on a school trip).

3.2 Key Legislation and Statutory Guidance (presented in a table)

Legislation / Guidance	Key Provisions	Relevance to this Policy
Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 – Regulation 23	Requires the home to promote health and wellbeing, including access to activities.	The home must provide a range of activities.
Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004 (as amended)	Requires licensing for providers of specified adventurous activities (caving, trekking, mountaineering, water sports).	The home must use licensed providers for such activities or carry out rigorous checks.
Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974	Duty to ensure safety of employees and others.	Risk assessments for activities must be completed.
Children Act 1989 – Section 22	Duty to safeguard and promote the child's welfare.	Activities must be in the child's best interests.

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026	Multi-agency safeguarding framework.	Overnight stays with friends/relatives may require DBS checks and risk assessment.
SCCIF 2026	Inspects how the home promotes enjoyment and achievement.	Inspectors will review activity plans, risk assessments, and children's participation.
Data Protection Act 2018 & UK GDPR	Governs sharing of children's information with activity providers.	Information shared on a "need to know" basis.

4. The Policy

4.1 Policy Statement and Commitments

Byram House will:

- Provide each child with an **activity plan** detailing day-to-day activities inside and outside the home.
- Understand and nurture each child's talents and interests, selecting activities based on personal preferences and abilities.
- Support children to try new activities and to take part in school trips, clubs, volunteering, and leisure activities.
- Recognise and celebrate children's achievements.
- Ensure that all activities are properly planned, risk assessed, and authorised by the Registered Manager (or delegate).
- Ensure that staffing ratios are adequate for the needs of the children and the risks posed.
- Consult children in the planning of activities and holidays.

4.2 Supporting Children to Enjoy Life and Have Fun

The Registered Manager must oversee and approve all activity arrangements. Each child will have an activity plan (recorded in their ISP or care plan) that details their engagement in activities.

Key principles for staff:

- Support children to access local leisure passes and community activities.
- Ensure protective equipment is worn where required.
- Where an activity may present additional challenges (e.g., due to emotional difficulties), the Registered Manager, in consultation with the social worker and any relevant professionals, will assess what is safe, achievable, and reasonable.

4.3 Activity Planning and Approval

Before any activity (including routine outings):

- The Registered Manager (or delegate) must approve all arrangements.
- A **risk assessment** must be completed (see section 4.8).
- A list of participating adults must be drawn up. At least one adult should be known to the children.
- **Staffing ratios:** As a minimum, one staff member for two children, unless the Registered Manager approves otherwise based on risk assessment (e.g., lower risk activities may permit higher ratios, higher risk may require 1:1).
- Where a child has a risk of confrontational or violent behaviour, staff undertaking the activity must be suitably trained in de-escalation and physical intervention (as per the Behaviour Support Policy).
- All staff must carry ID and a home mobile phone with emergency contact numbers.

For routine low-risk activities (e.g., visits to local cinema, park, swimming pool), a generic risk assessment may be approved for a period (e.g., 6 months) and reviewed regularly.

4.4 Involving Children in Planning

Children must be actively consulted about activities and interests they wish to pursue. For holidays or major trips, the home will:

- Involve children in researching options, planning itineraries, and deciding on activities.
- Discuss with children what information will be shared with activity providers about their background or needs (on a “need to know” basis).
- Explain the aims, expectations (behaviour, personal contact rules), emergency procedures, and required clothing/equipment.

4.5 Holidays (UK and Overseas)

UK holidays:

- Each child is entitled to the equivalent of 14 days' holiday in any 12-month period (under the National Framework Contract for Looked After Children).
- Holidays must be planned within the home's budget and submitted to the Responsible Individual for approval at least **8 weeks** in advance (including location, activities, financial breakdown, risk assessment, staffing ratios).
- Holidays must take place during school holidays (not term time).
- **Social worker approval** is required (unless delegated authority has been granted). If delegated authority is in place, it is still best practice to discuss holiday plans with the social worker.

Overseas holidays:

- Written permission from the **Director of Social Services** (placing authority) is required.
- The Registered Manager must submit a proposal with full risk assessments to the Head of Service at least **3 months** in advance.
- Passport and identity documents for looked-after children must be arranged as part of placement planning.

Interruption to contact: If a holiday interrupts normal contact with family, alternative arrangements must be considered and agreed with the social worker.

4.6 Overnight Stays and Social Visits

Overnight stays of more than four days (with relatives or friends):

- Must be approved by the social worker in writing (in the Placement Plan).
- Before approval, the social worker must arrange:

- DBS checks for all household members aged 16+.
- A risk assessment of the household.
- Confirmation of supervision arrangements.

Overnight stays of less than four days (including sleepovers with friends):

- If delegated authority is in place, the Registered Manager may approve, subject to:
 - Verifying the name of the responsible adult, contact details, and sleeping arrangements.
 - Ensuring the child has a means of contacting the home (mobile phone or known number).
 - Sharing essential information with the host (health needs, routines, behaviour risks) on a “need to know” basis (with the child’s agreement where possible).
- If the child refuses to allow appropriate information to be shared, the stay may be refused.
- The social worker must be informed as soon as practicable.

New friendships: If a child makes a new friend whilst in placement, significant unsupervised contact or overnight stays will not be permitted until the social worker has arranged the checks above.

Record keeping: All decisions and arrangements must be recorded in the child’s daily record and, where appropriate, the ISP.

4.7 Parental Consent and Delegated Authority

- **Parental consent** for contact with relatives and overnight stays should be obtained at placement planning. Parents’ views (including any refusal) must be recorded.
- **Delegated authority** for routine activities (e.g., day trips) may be agreed with the placing authority. For overnight stays, delegated authority is at the discretion of the social worker.
- Contact arrangements will not be withdrawn as a consequence imposed on a child. However, if a child is in crisis, discussions will take place before contact to rearrange for safety.

4.8 Risk Assessment for Activities

A written risk assessment must be completed for all activities (including holidays) and approved by the Registered Manager before departure.

Factors to consider:

- Type, location, and duration of activity.
- Modes of transport.
- Competence, experience, and qualifications of staff.
- Staff-to-child ratios (higher ratios for higher risk).
- Age, fitness, temperament, and specific needs of the children.
- Health and mental health needs.
- Equipment quality and suitability.
- Weather and seasonal conditions.
- Emergency procedures (including communication, first aid, and evacuation).
- The child's background (offending, absconding, drug/alcohol misuse, child protection issues).

Review: Risk assessments must be reviewed after any significant incident or change in circumstances. If a risk assessment is found to be inadequate, the activity must be suspended until a new assessment is completed.

Low-risk activities: A generic risk assessment may be used for repeated low-risk activities (e.g., weekly swimming), reviewed annually.

4.9 Adventurous Activities and Licensing

If the activity involves **caving, trekking, mountaineering, or water sports** (as defined by the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations), the provider **must** hold a valid licence from the Adventure Activity Licensing Authority (AALA). The Registered Manager must:

- Obtain the licence number (e.g., L1234/R5678) and verify it with the Licensing Authority.
- Confirm that the provider has suitable child protection policies, DBS checks, and references for staff.

For **non-licensed providers** (e.g., local outward-bound centres not requiring a licence), the Registered Manager must:

- Obtain a list of staff qualifications.
- Confirm DBS checks and references have been completed.
- Obtain copies of the provider's risk assessments.

4.10 Insurance, Transport, and Accommodation

Insurance: The activity provider must have adequate public liability insurance. The home's own insurance covers UK holidays. For hazardous activities or overseas holidays, additional insurance may be required – consult the Registered Manager.

Transport: All transport arrangements must be approved by the Registered Manager and included in the risk assessment. Staff must follow the **Transporting Children and Young People Policy**.

Accommodation (indoors):

- Accommodation should be exclusively for the group's use where possible.
- Must have heating, ventilation, fire alarms, secure locks, and adequate lighting.
- Sleeping arrangements must provide separate male/female facilities for children and adults (unless risk assessed otherwise).

- A night-time rota must be devised (shift leader not to retire until children have been settled for at least one hour).

Camping: Additional risk assessments for cooking, fire, security, and weather must be completed.

4.11 Use of Play Equipment (including Hot Tubs)

Outdoor play equipment:

- Must be purchased from a suitable supplier and conform to British and European standards.
- Installed safely to manufacturer's instructions.
- Included in weekly environmental checks; any damage must be reported and equipment not used until repaired.

Hot tubs (if installed):

- Children must **never** use a hot tub without an adult present at all times.
- Children must be tall enough to stand with head above water.
- For children up to age 11: maximum 5 minutes in the hot tub, then a break before returning.
- Rules: no jumping/diving, no glass, no running, no urinating, no use during thunderstorms.
- Not permitted if child has a cold, ear infection, cut, or open wound.
- Hot tub must be cleansed before and after use and secured when not in use.

4.12 Missing Child During an Activity

If a child becomes absent or missing during an activity, staff must follow the **Missing From Care Policy**. The police must be notified if the child is at high risk.

5. How the Home Trains its Staff About this Policy

Byram House provides structured training to ensure all staff understand and can implement this Recreation and Activity Policy effectively.

Training Element	Frequency	Method / Content
Induction	Upon appointment	Face-to-face training covering: activity planning, risk assessment, staffing ratios, holiday approval process, overnight stays, adventurous activity licensing, transport, and the dual-site operation (62 & 66 Deighton Road).
Annual refresher	Every 12 months	Classroom or virtual session covering updates to legislation, case studies of activity incidents, and refresher on risk assessment.
Risk assessment training	At induction and biennially	Practical training on completing activity risk assessments, including dynamic risk assessment during outings.
Outdoor activity safety	As needed	Training for staff who lead adventurous activities (e.g., first aid, group management, emergency procedures).

Staff are required to:

- Read and sign this policy annually.
- Complete all mandatory training.
- Never supervise an activity without an approved risk assessment and appropriate staffing ratios.

6. Related Policies and Guidance

- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Support Policy
- Restrictive Physical Intervention Policy
- Missing From Care Policy
- Transporting Children and Young People Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Parental Responsibility, Legal Status, Delegated Authority and Consent Policy
- Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026
- Social Care Common Inspection Framework (SCCIF) for Children's Homes 2026
- Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) guidance

7. Policy Approval and Review Details



Home	Byram House	
Reviewed by	Danyaal Iqbal / Mustafa Amin	Deputy Manager / Registered Manager
Approved by	Stacey Wagstaffe	Responsible Individual
Date	May 2026	