

**Contents:**

**3 Why run a holiday club?**

**4 Before you start**

**5 Funding**

**7 Timing**

**8 Venue**

**9 Food Provision**

**10 - 14 The Team and Their Responsibilities**

**15 Safety & Good Practice**

**16 The Programme & Legalities**

**17 Governance**

**18 During**

**19 After**

**20 Religious Resources Centre**

**22 Useful Contacts**

**23 Templates and Helpful Links**

**24 Potential Funders**

**Why run a Holiday Club?**

If you're looking to build connections with the local community then a Holiday club could be just the thing. Offering activities that engage the whole family can mean welcoming people who wouldn’t usually come into church.

As well as an outreach opportunity, holiday clubs can reduce pressure on family budgets, improve healthy eating and physical activity, combat social isolation for both children and adults, build confidence, skills and employability through volunteering opportunities.



**Before you start**

There is a lot of work to be done before your holiday club starts – some of it long before. Some items on the check list of things to do before the start of the holiday club can take a while to sort out, and the booking of venues and establishing availability of volunteers and staff needs to be done well in advance. Ideally planning for summer events, like TV adverts for summer holidays, should start when the nights are dark and the weather still wintry!

A good starting point for your planning is to ask the question, ‘Why do we want to do this?’ or perhaps it’s more a matter of, ‘Why does the vicar/PCC/mission group want us to do this?’ Wherever the vision for the holiday club has originated, it’s important that those who are going to be involved know the aims and feel able to share in them. It may be, of course, that the vision is quite vague, and your first planning task will therefore be to ‘firm it up’ and make sure the aims are clear and acceptable. Aims should be considered in relation to all those involved – what are the aims of the club in relation to:

• the children?

• their families?

• your church?

• your community?

• ecumenical partnerships?



**Funding**

You don’t need a huge budget to run a simple holiday club, and it might be that you can raise enough funds through donations or contributions from organisational funds – but chances are if your church is in an area where people are struggling, you will need some outside funding to make sure you can offer healthy food, and trips and activities will need to be subsidised. Most local councils have funding for holiday provision, but their requirements can be hard to fulfil, so make sure you have the capacity to offer what they require before spending time seeking funding. Some things to consider when looking at funders:

• How much is available?

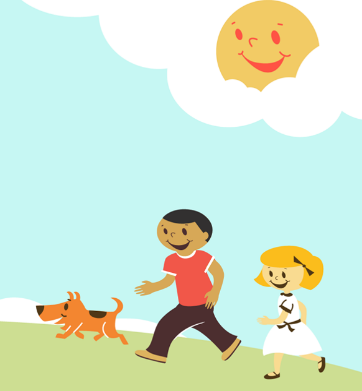
• How complicated is their application process, and how long does it take?

• How much information do they want in evaluation after the event?

• Do they have requirements around catering, number of sessions offered, and qualifications of people leading the groups?

Other possible sources of funding include: Local community foundations (County Durham Community Foundation, Tees Valley Community Foundation, Community Foundation Tyne and Wear), CTD (contact us directly for an application form), Greggs and the National Lottery small community grants, and other local funders will often support holiday activities. Local supermarkets and shops may also help with donations of food, so it is worth approaching them too.

Another thing to consider is whether you are going to ask for a contribution from families who attend. A small donation of 50p-£1 can help people to feel they are giving something back, value the activity more, and often stops people from signing up and then not coming along – your context (and funders’ requirements) will determine if that’s appropriate, but don’t underestimate the value of what you are doing – it can help families at a really difficult time, and many will want to be able to give something towards that. If you would like help with any of this, contact us for individual support and signposting to relevant funders.



**Timing**

Some points to consider:

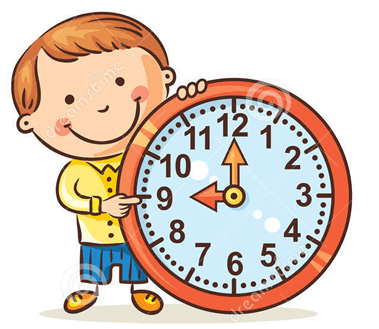
• how many sessions do you want to run – how long will they be and how frequent? Availability of your proposed leaders and the venue will be important factors to take into consideration

• do the proposed dates clash with any other events in the community or your church?

• do you want to coordinate with any other events – eg a special service in church to round the club off or a community fair?

• do the length and number of your sessions require you to inform OFSTED of your activities (see ‘legalities’ section).

Don’t overcommit, but do build on what you already do or are good at. For example, if you hold a weekly Messy Church consider continuing it through the holidays, invite a wider group and include a light lunch. Be realistic about what you plan and how long the sessions are. They can be exhausting so try to keep the sessions to 4 hours or less. It’s far better to start small and succeed, building up slowly as capacity and demand align, than going large and burning out.



**Venue**

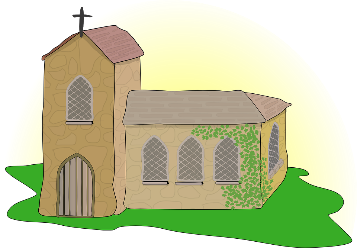
Where will the Club be held? Are there a variety of options in your community which will allow a choice to meet the needs of your planned club – or is there only one possibility, which will therefore determine the nature of your activities and the numbers you can accommodate? Here are some factors to take into consideration with regard to the venue:

• It must be suitable for the kinds of activities proposed, and the number of children you hope to attract (as a rule of thumb, a minimum of 25 square feet per child is recommended for 5 – 8 year-olds and ideally one toilet and hand basin per 10 children)

• Catering facilities must meet legal requirements (NB no children should have unsupervised access to the kitchen)

• Will you be able to have access before and after the sessions to prepare and tidy up, and will you be able to leave things out from one session to the next?

• Is it available for the dates you require? Don’t make assumptions! Check availability as soon as you can and make a booking as soon as you are sure you want to use the venue.

****• How much does it cost? Is it within budget?

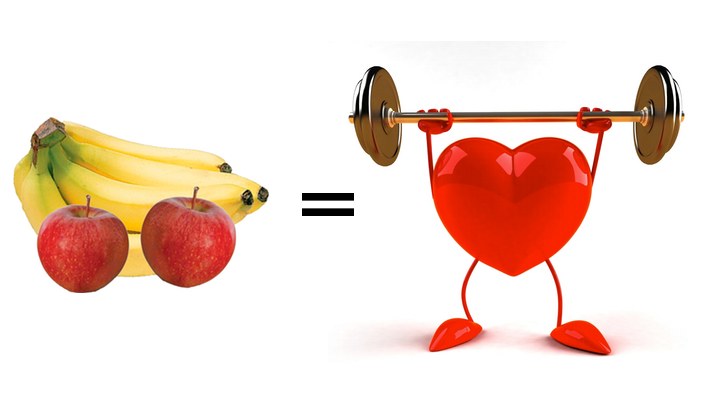
**Food Provision**

Consider whether you will buy in ready-made food or will be able to prepare fresh, ‘home-cooked’ meals.

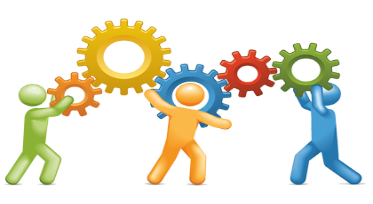
Providing simple healthy food and snacks should be the aim. The quality and freshness of the food is more important than whether it is a hot meal. It is worth approaching local businesses and other community organisations to ask if they will partner with you. In the past, a local hotel supported Gateshead activities and taught the children how to make fruit smoothies.

Ensure dietary requirements are included on the consent forms. You do not need a food hygiene certificate to make and sell food for charity events. However, you need to make sure that you handle food safely. It is best practice to have at least one person on the catering team hold a Level 2 Food Hygiene Certificate. <https://www.food.gov.uk/safety-hygiene/providing-food-at-community-and-charity-events>

Consider offering food to parents too as they often miss more meals than their children.



**The Team**



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A Holiday club is a great opportunity for team work, but you need to be sure you have a full team before you kick off! All who are going to be adult leaders need to be appointed according to the policy of your parish and in accordance with the Diocesan Safeguarding Policy, using the practice of Safer Recruitment. <https://d3hgrlq6yacptf.cloudfront.net/61d750a40a35a/content/pages/documents/diocesan-safeguarding-policy.pdf>

You need sufficient adult leaders for the number of children you have participating in activities (remember ‘adult’ means over 18 – under 18s can assist adults but must be counted as children in calculating the adult:child ratio, and they must not take any leadership responsibilities) There is no specific guidance about supervision ratios for organisations that are not in the education or early years sectors. The NSPCC has put together some best practice guidance to help other organisations work out how many adults are needed to supervise children safely.

They recommend the following adult to child ratios as the minimum numbers to help keep children safe:

For 0 to 2 years - 1 leader to every 3 children (1:3)

For 2 to 3 years - 1 leader to every 4 children (1:4)

For 3 to 8 years - 1 leader to every 8 children (1:8)

For over 8s - 1 leader for the first 8 children

followed by 1:12 (i.e. 32 children would require 3 leaders)

There should always be more than one leader for any group and if possible have at least one male and one female leader if the group is mixed. Have some ‘reserves’ lined up in case a leader falls ill or is unavoidably prevented from taking part for some other reason.

It is important that everyone knows their own, and other people’s duties and responsibilities within the team. You will need people who will take on the following roles:

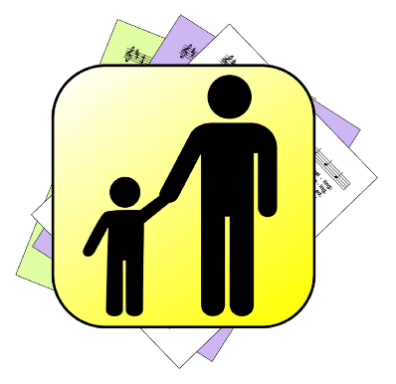
**Registration**

No child can be admitted to activities who has not produced a consent form signed by a parent, or an adult with parental responsibility. If adults are staying with their children, then different consent forms will be needed.

It is a good idea to have these forms completed and returned before the club starts so that you can avoid over-subscription. (Remember, the venue, number of leaders, proposed activities and overall aims will have an effect on the numbers and ages of the children you can welcome into the club).

Prior registration will help you inform the caterers of any food allergies (watch out for nuts, especially) or dietary requirements and the first aider of any special medical information. It will also enable you to group the children before the club starts – you need to decide whether the groups will be divided by age or some other criterion, what to call them, and how to distinguish them. Badges are helpful, and the registration person or team could give these out on the first day. All adults involved in the club should have badges, as well as the children. Any adult or child who is spotted on the premises who does not have a badge should be challenged.

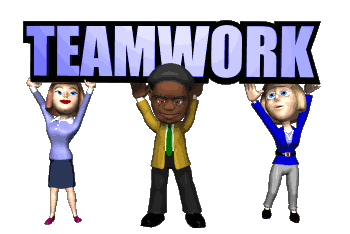
General consent forms must be collected on the first day of the club, and at every subsequent session a register of those present must be taken and any children who are collected early should be noted.

As you may well be dealing with children and families who are not well known to you, it might be helpful to have a ‘receipt slip’ system for picking children up. When a child arrives, the accompanying adult is issued with a receipt slip which they must present in order to collect the child at the end of the session. If another adult is to pick the child up, the slip should be passed on to them by the delivering adult as proof of their authority to pick up the child. If a parent wants their child to go home unaccompanied, this should be written on the back of the slip, which is then given to the child’s group leader.  If an adult asks to collect a child and claims the slip has been lost, the Club Coordinator should decide whether the child can be safely collected by the adult in question.

**Group Leaders and Helpers**

Have someone to ‘front’ the proceedings, introduce different items of the programme, lead any ‘plenary’ parts of the sessions, and most importantly to keep an eye on the time and keep things moving on according to schedule.

Each activity should have a clear leader who should be assisted by a helper to take care of any practicalities. These adults will be the main relationship focus for the children and should provide good role models in terms of joining in activities and having fun!



**Specialist Roles**

You will need people who can cover the following areas: food preparation and serving; publicity; administration; first aid; cleaning and possibly some other areas.

Common sense must be used in judging who needs to go through DBS checks. Those who have no contact with children (eg perhaps the catering, publicity or administration people) do not need to be checked, and occasional helpers may also not need them, as long as they are not likely to be alone with children. If you are at all unsure, contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team for support in making these decisions – there are rules around unnecessary checking, as well as who does need to have them, so don’t just automatically assume everyone will need a full disclosure.

**Meetings**

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You will need some planning meetings at which you can come to decisions on the issues outlined above: aims, timing, venue and team members. You will also have to make decisions on the following:

• numbers and ages of participants

• budget: how much will you spend on the venue, materials, catering, photocopying and printing, equipment and resources, other expenditure specific to your plans. How you will cover your costs – perhaps an entrance fee, a fundraising event or a request to PCC for subsidy if wanting to be accessible to all.

• publicity: this should clearly be targeted according to the children you wish to attract. Posters might be displayed in significant places in the community, particularly in schools, and information could be posted on the parish website, distributed at local events, shown on a banner outside the church, or sent to last year’s participants if you ran activities last year. (NB if children’s details are to be entered on a database, this must be made clear on the registration form, and the option given not to have the details used in this way).

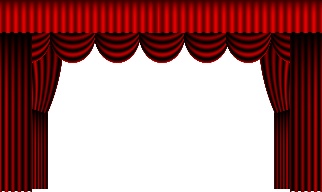
In addition, you may well need one or more sessions for working parties to produce or decide how to acquire the materials needed for activities. Consider partnering with other organisations and groups who can share resources and expertise.

**Safety and Good Practice**

All leaders must be reminded of Safeguarding matters – particularly referral procedures – as detailed in your parish Safeguarding Policy. Preparing for the club is also a good opportunity for the Team to remind themselves of general principles of good practice when working with children – experienced leaders amongst your Team can share their insights with those who are just beginning in this ministry.

**The Programme**

If you are using published Holiday club material, you will need to go through it as a group and work out how you are going to deliver it and whether it needs adapting in any way. If you are developing your own material, you will need to establish a theme and do quite a bit of work planning how to explore it with the children.

The Religious Resources Centre has a wealth of suitable materials, games and books. The staff are always happy to help with ideas and Durham clergy receive free membership!

**Legalities**

• Insurance – check that your parish policy covers the club as a whole and any specific activities that you plan to include in it.

• OFSTED – you will need to register with OFSTED if your Club entails all three of the following:

it includes under 8s;

it runs for more than five days in the year;

the sessions last for 2 hours or more.

For further details and clarification ring the OFSTED helpline 0845 601 4771.

• Outings need separate parental consent, or a separate section on the general consent form. Check your parish insurance cover for any outings and the legalities of your transport arrangements (you need to display a permit if you are taking a group of children in a mini-bus – contact DVLA for details 01792 782318)



**The PCC/Governing Body**

The PCC will have ultimate legal responsibility for your holiday club, so they must approve it and will need an outline of the proposal – they may want to know dates, times, venue, leadership, numbers, aims, material/theme, and of course the financial implications! PCC approval should be sought in principle at the earliest possible point. An enthusiastic but diplomatic advocate who is willing to speak in support of the proposal might be helpful!

**During**

Now that all the hard preparatory work has been done, there’s just the little matter of actually running the club! There will be a whole host of practicalities to check through for every session, but these will vary according to the material you are using. However, the following general points will always apply:

• Make sure the rooms you are going to use are safe and set out as you want them

• Make sure all those with a job to do are there well in advance of the start time and that they have a number they can ring to give good warning if they are going to be late or unable to attend (this should only happen in an absolute emergency!)

• Have the building well sign-posted: toilets, areas for activities, emergency exits, areas which are ‘off-limits’ to children

• Make sure you have an accident book and access to a telephone, and that all adults know where these are to be found

• Have all materials to hand and make sure everyone knows where everything is. Always have a few extra of any prepared materials

• Follow your agreed registration procedures carefully

**After**

When it’s all over – that’s not the end of the story. Your original aims should have placed this holiday club in the context of the ongoing work and mission of you church, so the question is what and where next?

• As a team, you should have been evaluating and reflecting on each day as activities took place. Now it is over, you need a de-briefing session to reflect on the club as a whole. Perhaps a report/ presentation could be prepared for the PCC or wider church community which will also be very helpful when planning future events. Gather the stories of the impact the club has had on individuals, families, the church etc.

• Plan an event to round off the holiday club, involving the parents either immediately after the club, or sometime later (NB always give families plenty of notice so that they can get such events in their diaries).

• Plan some longer term follow up. (NB if this entails the children ‘reconvening’ as a group, OFSTED may regard this as another meeting of the holiday club, which may have implications for registration with them)

And finally….. BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER, PRAY! And get other people in your church to commit themselves to praying for the children, the club, and you.



Are you looking for new ideas and resources for Children’s Ministry? When were you last in the North East Religious Learning Resources Centre?  (known to most as the Religious Resources Centre or RRC!).

The RRC is the largest RE Centre in the country and holds a wealth of resources for holiday clubs and children’s ministry, including books, DVD’s, posters, banners, puppets, costumes, instruments, Godly Play, Eggsplorers, topic boxes and bags and more!

The RRC is based on two sites:

Church House, St John’s Terrace, Percy Main, NE29 6HS

Cuthbert House, Stonebridge Lane, Stonebridge, Durham, DH1 3RY

The centre is open Monday to Friday 10:00-12:30 and 1:30-5:30

Everyone is welcome to visit and anyone can join!

The membership fees are excellent value for money. Individual membership costs just £28.50 (Concessions £16.50) and every member can borrow up to 10 resources at a time, including 3 boxes or bags.

To find out more:

Visit:

[www.resourcescentreonline.co.uk](http://www.resourcescentreonline.co.uk)

<https://www.facebook.com/ReligiousRC>

<https://twitter.com/ReligiousRC>

<https://www.instagram.com/religiousresourcescentre/>

Contact the RRC via:: [enquiries@resourcescentreonline.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@resourcescentreonline.co.uk) or 0191 375 0586

**USEFUL CONTACTS**

**Beth Miller** – Durham Diocesan Safeguarding Officer

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**Andy Harris** – Durham Leader of Youth Mission and Ministry

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**Maddy Fisher** – Communities Together Durham

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[www.communitiestogetherdurham.org.uk](http://www.communitiestogetherdurham.org.uk)

**TEMPLATES**

Free templates for risk assessments and registration forms are available to download on the Church of England website:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/safeguarding/policy-practice-guidance/templates-and-resources>

**Helpful Links**

NSPCC Recommended adult to child ratios for working with children:

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/briefings/recommended-adult-child-ratios-working-with-children/>

All Party Parliamentary Groups Report ‘Hungry Holidays’:

<https://feedingbritain.files.wordpress.com/2015/02/hungry-holidays.pdf>

**Links For Potential Funders**

Communities Together Durham:

<https://communitiestogetherdurham.org.uk/>

Greggs Foundation:

<https://www.greggsfoundation.org.uk/grants>

The National Lottery Community Fund:

<https://www.tnlcommunityfund.org.uk/>