

UK Athletics

Coach Guidance on appropriate levels of supervision for children and young people

When working with groups of children and young people there must be enough adults to provide the appropriate level of supervision. Staffing and supervision ratios can sometimes be difficult to determine. As a coach, your responsibilities are to ensure you have enough suitable volunteers to ensure children are safe and that the session can be delivered in a safe and enjoyable environment.

We have put together some information below to help you make an informed decision.

Section 1 -Supervision

Supervision levels and nature of that supervision will depend on a number of things:

- Age
- Gender
- Behaviour
- Ability of group and any reasonable adjustments that are required
- Any special needs
- The nature and duration of the session activities
- The competence and experience of volunteers involved
- The maturation levels and experience of the athletes being coached
- The location of the session
- Equipment type, complexity required for the session

Carry out a risk assessment of the activities you are planning, taking these things into account. This will help you to make a decision about the number of volunteers and the nature of their experience required for the session to remain safe, fun and promote learning.

See <https://www.uka.org.uk/governance/health-safety/risk-assessments/> as a guide and for useful information.

Section 2 - Coaches and volunteers

Coaches and volunteers need to have:

- A UKA Licence for certain activities (see <https://www.uka.org.uk/grassroots/coach-education/already-qualified/> Coaching Defined)
- An understanding of their responsibilities to keep children, young people & adults safe and what to do if they have concerns about a child's well-being (see <https://www.uka.org.uk/governance/safeguarding/uka-safeguarding-adults-at-risk-policy/> & <https://www.uka.org.uk/governance/safeguarding/uka-safeguarding-children-policy/> for more information)
- Agreed codes of practice, either with the coach or the club

NB – parents who attend activities with their children, should not be used to supervise activities unless they have been specifically recruited to that role based on the guidance above and have the necessary DBS checks and safeguarding training, or self-declaration where appropriate (see <https://www.uka.org.uk/governance/welfare-and-safeguarding/> for more information)

Section 3 - Recommended Adult to Child ratios

There is no specific guidelines on adult to child ratios for organisations that are not in the education or early years sectors. We have taken these guidelines from the NSPCC Best Practice Guidance and we recommend that you use these as a minimum guide, whilst considering the supervision guidance in section 1.

8-12 years; 1 adult to 8 children

13-18 years; 1 adult to 10 children

Based on the nature of the activity and ability of the children, you may need more than this minimum. We recommend 2 adults should be present for all sessions involving children. Adults is defined as someone aged 18 or over.

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

Section 4 – Toilet ratios

If the group has boys and girls who require supervision to the toilet, there should be a male and female adult supervising these visits.

Best practice is to encourage the children to take toilet breaks at the same time or in groups so that this can be supervised by one adult, leaving the other with the rest of the group.

If you have any questions related to this, or any other coaching matter please contact:

coacheducation@britishathletics.org.uk

or the UKA Welfare team at:

safeguarding@uka.org.uk
