

## Supervising children and young people in athletics

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**Note:** This guidance is for anyone with responsibility for planning or delivering activities for children and young people. The terms 'child' and 'young person' describe any person under the age of 18. References to 'parents' should be read as parents and carers inclusively.

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### Why are supervision ratios important?

Correct supervision ratios are part of a club's duty of care to safeguard and protect children and young people. They need to form part of planning and risk assessments for any activity in order to: -

- minimise risks to participants.
- enhance the benefits children and young people draw from the activity.
- help deliver the activity safely and appropriately.
- ensure there is enough appropriate adult support should any issues arise.
- reassure parents.

### Ratios

The following ratios are recommended UK Athletics. In any case activities should be planned to involve at least two adults, preferably one male and one female.

AGE	RATIO
3 and over	1:8
All children over 8yrs	1:10

These ratios are a relevant minimum for normal activities. They ensure at least basic cover in the event of something impacting on the availability of one of the adults during the activity.

They should be increased for additional risk factors such as overnight stays, trips away, children who have previously displayed challenging behaviour, or particular activities such as road running when one adult could not reasonably see all of the participants at once, and technical events; where there are additional safety considerations.

In the planning of all activities, and regardless of any other assessments that maybe required (for health and safety purposes, for example), a risk assessment should be undertaken that specifically informs decision- making about appropriate supervision levels.

- The number of children involved in the activity
- The age, maturity and experience of the children
- Whether any of the group leaders or children has a disability or special requirements
- Whether any of the children have challenging behaviour
- The particular hazards associated with the activity
- The particular hazards associated with the environment
- The level of qualification and experience of the volunteers
- The programme of activities
- Whether there are volunteers under the age 18

### **Toilet supervision**

If the group has both boys and girls there should be at least one male and one female responsible adult supervising visits to the toilet.

In larger groups of children, encourage groups to take a comfort break together with one responsible adult while the other adult(s) supervise the remaining children.

### **Young people as supervisors**

Athletics provide opportunities for under-18s to coach, officiate, volunteer, or organise events for other children, including achieving qualifications and awards. These opportunities allow young people to develop skills, experience and confidence but should not mean that organisations and clubs should depend on them to take full responsibility for managing groups of children. Under-18s in coaching or other roles should only be in a supporting role to the adult with overall responsibility for supervising the activity. Therefore, they must not be counted as an adult when calculating supervision ratios.

### **Parents as supervisors**

Although UKA encourages parents to accompany children to activities, we do not recommend that those planning or providing activities include parents in supervision calculations, unless the parents are acting in a formal volunteering or other capacity during the activity. In these circumstances, this should mean that those parents meet all appropriate requirements in terms of:

- clarity about their role
- appropriate background checks suitable to their role
- undertaking relevant safeguarding children training
- who has overall responsibility for the group
- what is acceptable practice