



WE DISCOVER, WE GROW

Girlguiding

Taking Girls to Large-scale Events

Simple tips for a big adventure!

Introduction 2

Planning your visit to a large-scale event 2

- Choosing an event 2
- Ensuring the event is for all girls 2
- Organising your Leadership Team 3
- Planning to get there 3
- Planning supervision at the event 3
- Additional considerations for a large-scale residential event 4
- Communication with parents 4
- Before you go 5
- Using a home contact system 5
- What to bring and what to wear 5

At the event 5

- Group essentials 5
- Supervision during the event 6
- Travel tips 6

What if? 7

- If the coach doesn't arrive or the train is delayed 7
- If someone is taken ill or has an accident 7
- If a girl gets lost 8

Top tips for a great time 8

- Before 8
- During the event 8
- After 8

Further resources 9

Appendix: Suggested kit list 10

Introduction

So, the girls in your unit want to go to a large-scale event. Anyone who has ever been to the BIG GIG or Wellies and Wristbands will know that attending a large-scale event can be one of the highlights of a girl's guiding experience. It can provide memories that last a lifetime.

A large-scale event is defined as any event that has a hundred or more participants. This includes one-day events, overnights and residentials that last for several days. It can be indoors or outdoors, and includes camps, festivals, parties, sleepovers, outings and many more.

Taking your girls to a large-scale event for the first time may seem like a daunting prospect. It can involve a lot of advance planning, perhaps a long journey to and from the venue, and an unfamiliar environment involving hundreds or even thousands of other girls and Leaders or non-guiding people. However, a unit trip to a large-scale event need not be as difficult as it might first appear. You may have already taken your unit away on short local trips and small residential events, which means that you are already familiar with the essential Girlguiding procedures, forms to complete and requirements for keeping your girls safe.

We hope that the guidance and advice in this document, from experienced Leaders who have taken girls to large-scale events and Girlguiding Large-scale Event Coordinators, will help you and your girls make the most of your adventure and have fun.

Planning your visit to a large-scale event

Once your girls have decided they would like to go to a large-scale event, involve them from the start in choosing which event to go to.

Choosing an event

- Look at which events have been popular in the past with other girls. Ask your Commissioner and Leaders with experience of taking girls to large-scale events for recommendations.
- Consider which events would be suitable for the age, interests and abilities of the girls in your unit.
- Consider which events could provide your girls with opportunities that are not available locally.
- Work out roughly what the whole trip is likely to cost, including food and travel. Check with the event organisers what is and is not included in the event fee, such as food. Remember that you might be able to apply for a grant or do some fundraising.
- Consider whether you need any help, support or training to take the girls to the event, and where you can get it. For example, do you need to recruit more volunteers for the Leadership Team for the event?
- For large-scale residential events, check with the event organisers for licence-holder requirements. Do you need to hold or be working towards the Going Away With Scheme? If so, speak to your Commissioner about it.
- Remember that popular events need to be booked quickly, as soon as tickets go on sale, which can be months in advance.

Ensuring the event is for all girls

Consider how you will ensure the opportunity is available to all the girls in your unit who would like to go.

Top tips for funding your trip

Will the trip be affordable for everyone? Below are suggestions to ensure it is.

- Consider flexible payments options.

- Girlguiding has a number of grants to help you make sure that guiding is available to all girls and young women. See the 'Grants' section of the Girlguiding website.
- Consider fundraising together for some of the money. See the 'Fundraising' section of the website for advice.
- Ask your Commissioner and other Leaders for funding advice.
- See the 'Members from low income background' guidance on the Girlguiding website for more information.

Additional needs

Do any of the girls have extra support needs to consider?

- Ask the event organisers for information about the event and venue - for example, disability access and other provisions, inclusiveness of activities on offer and so on.
- Take a look at the 'Members with additional needs' section of the website or contact your relevant County Adviser for members with additional needs.

Organising your Leadership Team

If you are taking lots of girls to a large-scale event, you are likely to need more adult volunteers than you would normally have at your weekly meeting to maintain the appropriate adult-to-child ratios.

- Remember that for most roles at events you can have both male and female volunteers. However, you will need female volunteers if the girls will need help getting changed (eg for water activities).
- Consider how many adults you will need when dividing into smaller groups. Adult-to-child ratios given in *The Guiding Manual* are the minimum requirement.
- If you need to recruit more adults, see the 'Reach more adults' section of the Girlguiding website for ideas about how to do so.
- If staying at an overnight event, speak to your Commissioner well in advance about arranging Girlguiding recruitment checks for volunteers over the age of 18 who have not yet completed them. See *The Guiding Manual* for more details.
- If it is not an overnight event, temporary adult helpers such as parents will not be required to have recruitment checks or to hold the role of 'residential occasional helper'. They will, however, still need to be supervised by an adult volunteer.
- Include Young Leaders in the team for added help and support. Just remember that as they are under 18 they should not be expected to perform the role of an adult volunteer.

Planning to get there

Consider how you will travel to the event.

- For large groups, hiring a coach may be a cost-effective option and has the advantage of getting you directly from A to B.
- For smaller groups private cars can be worth considering.
- Public transport can be a cheap and flexible option, especially in larger cities where children may get free travel or reduced fare.
- Consider recruiting more volunteers to accompany you on the journey to help with supervision on public transport.

Planning supervision at the event

The agreed supervision of young members at a large-scale event must be made clear in advance, both with your Leadership Team and with the girls. The girls may see other units being organised differently at the event, and so it is essential that everyone knows the plan and the reasons behind it. You must follow the regulations in *The Guiding Manual*, especially regarding adult-to-child ratios.

- Follow the advice given by the event organisers, and consider the nature of the event, those attending and what activities are on offer.
- Ensure the supervision is age appropriate. For example, you might supervise a group of 10-year-olds shopping in a small town. In contrast, for a group of 14-year-olds you might give them a time and place to meet and ensure that one Leader is always at the meeting place and contactable by the girls at all times. If girls are to be in groups on their own, you must have gained specific permission from their parents/carers for this. Follow the regulations regarding 'Guides and members of The Senior Section walking without a Leader' in *The Guiding Manual*.
- Consider your own girls' abilities and needs: their levels of independence, how they will cope with different situations, how they are when out and about closer to home, what they are confident of taking responsibility for, if it is their first big event or if they have previous experience, and so on.

Additional considerations for a large-scale residential event

Large-scale residential events are a great option for units looking for something a little different. They can be some of the most popular and memorable experiences girls will have in their guiding journey. If you are taking girls to such an event, you will need to consider a few additional things.

- Ensure you have completed all the necessary forms for a residential event.
- Submit a Residential Event Notification (REN) form to your Commissioner for approval in plenty of time and ensure you indicate that it is a large-scale event.
- Everybody needs to complete a Health Information or Health Information for International Travel form.
- Do you need to hold or be working towards the relevant Going Away With Scheme modules for the event? If yes, speak to your Commissioner about it. Some Girlguiding events will provide licence holders. For events that do, make this clear on your REN form.
- If the event is abroad, you will need to complete the Travelling Abroad module of the Going Away With Scheme. Girlguiding has a Travelling Abroad training programme to support this; ask your International Adviser for more information about it. Factor in how much further ahead you will need to plan, including completing the REN form.
- Check with the organisers what is provided in terms of catering and accommodation. Sleeping arrangements in particular will vary at large-scale events, from a sleepover in one big room for hundreds to highly organised camping arrangements for thousands. Consider how you will ensure that both girls and adults get enough sleep, especially if adults or members of The Senior Section are driving the next day.
- What are the toilet and bathroom facilities? Remember that if you have male volunteers in your team they will need separate washing and sleeping areas.
- Contact your Commissioner and Residential Adviser for further advice about residential events, and consult the further resources (page 9) listed in this guidance.

Communication with parents

Send a letter to parents as soon as you know the date of the event to gauge initial interest. Ask for a deposit at this stage as well to ensure commitment.

Closer to the event, write to parents again to:

- give details of dates, times and drop-off and collection points
- ask them to complete an Information and Consent for Event/Activity form (available from the Girlguiding website). Be sure to tick the box on this form to indicate to parents that this is a large-scale event
- provide a list of things to bring and wear (see Appendix on page 10 for a suggested kit list)
- make arrangements to collect payment
- explain the home contact system.

Before you go

Ensure you have all the information you need from the event organisers; contact them if you are unsure or need more information. Ensure you meet deadlines, such as for confirming places, for making payments, and for booking travel, activities and food. Failing to do so can affect everyone's enjoyment of the event.

Provide the girls and adults with all the relevant information they need, including contact numbers, where to be and when, what is expected of them, and what to do in emergency situations. Provide all this in advance to allow them enough time to ask any questions.

Using a home contact system

A home contact must be appointed for residential events and one-day large-scale events. The home contact must have all of the girls' and adults' details and is responsible for notifying parents if you are delayed or in the event of an accident or emergency.

- Your home contact should be a responsible adult who is not related to anyone in the group. Your local Commissioner may be able to suggest someone suitable or you may be able to ask another local Leader.
- He or she should be prepared to make multiple phone calls in a short space of time if required, for example to inform parents of a change to the collection time for the girls.
- You must be confident that they can cope with communicating an emergency situation, such as an accident involving members of the group, and that they understand the data protection guidance for holding and then correctly disposing of members' details.

Remember to tell parents in what circumstances they might receive a call from the home contact so they don't panic and assume there has been an accident. See *The Guiding Manual* for more details.

What to bring and what to wear

To help participants decide what to pack and what to wear for the event, consider the following.

- What do the event organisers advise on what to bring and what to wear? Some events will provide specific instructions.
- How will you recognise your group, especially if it is a uniformed event, among all the other Girlguiding members present? Do you have a group neckerchief or other accessory that can help you identify each other?
- Is the event mainly indoors or outdoors? Do the girls need full waterproofs and extra layers or sunhats and sunscreen?
- What activities, if any, are being offered at the event? What sort of footwear will be most suitable for them?
- How long is the event lasting? If it is a residential event over several days, how many changes of clothing and how much other kit do the girls need to bring?

Remember that it is more important that both girls and adults are warm, dry and comfortable than that they are wearing pristine uniform.

See also the Appendix (page 10) for a suggested kit list for girls and adults for a one-day large-scale event.

At the event

Group essentials

- A first aid kit stocked appropriately for the activities you are doing. Check the arrangements at the event in advance, but as a minimum you should have basic supplies to cover the journey and any minor problems

while there. *Going Away With Guiding* and *Health Matters* provide suggested contents for first aid kits. Ensure the group's first aider is fully briefed on any specific health needs as appropriate.

- Group money, including some for contingencies, and a credit card, if appropriate.
- Girls' Information and Consent for Event/Activity forms and contact details for your home contact, Commissioner and the event organisers.
- Booking confirmations and/or tickets.
- A camera to record the event. Remember that you will need to check the photo permissions for the girls in their Information and Consent forms - large-scale events are not included in the general photo and video permissions granted by parents and carers to Girlguiding. Check with the event organisers if there are systems for identifying girls who cannot be in photos.
- Emergency snacks in case of delays - especially for the journey home.
- Empty plastic bags, such as shopping bags, for use as rubbish bags and to sit on.
- Where possible, ensure that adults have fully charged mobile phones with enough credit and know each other's numbers. Be aware that mobile phone usage may not be possible if you are somewhere remote with poor signal, abroad, travelling underground or at a very busy event where networks are busy. If so, you may need to think of alternative ways to contact or meet each other.

Remember that you don't have to carry everything yourself - distribute the load evenly between the group.

Supervision during the event

- Respect other units at the event and how they supervise themselves, and expect the same courtesy. If you are asked for advice by other Leaders, share with them - although don't take offence if they then do things differently. Like you, they are doing what they judge to be best for their group.
- Do not supervise girls from other units unless they have asked you for help or they are in immediate danger.
- Trying to keep a large number of girls and adults together can be difficult and tiring for your Leadership Team, so consider splitting into supervised smaller groups (remember to maintain the correct adult-to-child ratios). Arrange regular meet-ups and/or keep in close contact by mobile phone, and ensure all girls and adults know what is agreed.
- Ensure all girls understand and agree to expectations of behaviour at the event and how they will contribute to the group.
- Make it clear to your girls that your decision and that of the event organiser is final.

Travel tips

- If you are travelling by coach, make sure you can identify which one is yours. Have the firm's or driver's contact details to hand.
- Make sure an adult who knows where you are going sits at the front of the coach and acts as liaison with the driver.
- Make sure adults are spread throughout the coach, bus or train carriage (remember to maintain the correct adult-to-child ratios).
- Ensure that an adult is first and last to get both on and off public transport in case the group is split up by closing doors.
- Make sure your first aid supplies are readily to hand and that you are prepared to deal with any occurrence of travel sickness.
- If the coach is stopping at a service station or you have time at a station, decide how the girls will be supervised. Will they be allowed to go to the shop or just the toilet? Will they be able to stay on the coach if they want to? Remember that parents will need to have granted permission for girls to go off in groups without adults (see 'Planning supervision at the event', page 3).
- Ensure all girls and adults know the route and itinerary, and what to do if they get separated from the group.

What if?

The vast majority of guiding trips pass entirely without incident and, if you follow *The Guiding Manual* and the event organiser's advice, it is extremely unlikely that you will have any problems. However, these are some of the situations that could occur and suggestions for things to consider in your risk assessment and responses.

If the coach doesn't arrive or the train is delayed

In advance

- If travelling by train, call or look online far in advance and again the week before to check for engineering work delays and unexpected problems such as strike action.
- If travelling by coach, make sure that you have the company's contact number to hand and if possible an alternative transport plan.

During the event

- If you are delayed on your way to the event for a significant amount of time, let the event organiser know.
- If you are delayed on your way home inform the home contact.
- Have games, songs and other activities prepared to help fill time.

Top tip

Call the coach company a week beforehand to confirm arrangements. Ask them what time they are coming rather than confirm with them the agreed time; it is all too easy for someone at the other end to agree without checking.

If someone is taken ill or has an accident

In advance

- Ensure that each participant has filled in an Information and Consent form (and Health Information form for residential events) and carry them with you so that you have any relevant information to hand.
- Ask parents of girls who experience travel sickness to arrange for any medication needed. Bring along spare clothes, sick bags and cleaning products.

During the event

- Follow the Emergency Action Plan in your unit's Emergency File.
- Provide immediate first aid and obtain further treatment, if necessary. Where possible, use first aid facilities available at the event.
- If a girl needs hospital treatment, arrange for one adult to go with her. When planning the event, make sure that you have enough adults to manage this.
- If possible, make arrangements for a girl's parents to come to the event or local hospital to collect her and for the adult to remain with her until they arrive.
- Make sure the event organisers are aware of any accidents or incidents that have happened.
- Other than in the event of a serious accident or illness, if the problem occurs while travelling, try to either get to the event or to the drop-off point.
- Provide brief details to the other parents when you get back rather than letting them learn a distorted version of events through hearsay.
- Complete a Notification of Accident/Incident form if medical treatment was needed and Accident/Incident Witness Statement forms if applicable, and inform your local Commissioner.
- If travelling abroad, notify your travel insurer.

If a girl gets lost

Girls are rarely truly lost, but even if a girl gets separated from the group for only a short time it can be distressing.

In advance

- Make sure girls know the name of their unit and your real name (not Brown Owl!).
- Ensure the girls are wearing something to help you spot them easily in a crowd.
- Inform all participants of the timings and itinerary for the event.
- Give each girl an item, such as a card, label or wristband, with your mobile number written on it.
- If you are travelling by public transport, tell girls in advance what to do if they get left behind.
- Ensure girls know where the 'lost children points' are at the event and what they need to do if they get separated from the group.

During the event

- Most large events will have 'lost children points', so alert them or the event organisers immediately.
- Ask for an announcement to be made over the public address system if there is one.
- Keep all the other girls together and ensure they remain supervised. Check who last saw the missing girl and where she was, and then begin a systematic search of the places where she might be.
- If she is not found after a search, contact your Commissioner and your home contact (who will contact her parents).
- Follow the advice of the event organisers and your Commissioner.

Top tips for a great time

Before

- Join with another group to share resources and gain extra Leadership Team support, especially if it is your first time.
- Ensure that everyone knows what is happening before the event. Manage their expectations but be prepared for excited girls!
- Make sure the Leadership Team is clear about what they are doing and what you need from them.
- Make your girls look unique - consider getting personalised unit T-shirts or matching clothing for the event.
- Include a risk assessment in your planning so that you are prepared for anything that can happen.

During the event

- Check all the information and have it to hand; know what is your responsibility and what is the event organisers'.
- Make sure everyone knows the plan for the event, such as meet-up times and arrangements.
- Make time to eat, drink, go to the toilet and take a breather from the excitement.
- Take a sign to hold up in a crowd so the girls can spot you easily to re-group.
- Remember that you are supposed to enjoy it too! If you are having fun this will encourage the girls to enjoy the event too, even if not everything goes as planned.

After

- Evaluate the trip with your Leadership Team and the girls. Record for next time what went well and what you would like to improve.
- Thank your Leadership Team for all their help and celebrate what went well.
- Start planning your next large-scale adventure!

Further resources

***The Guiding Manual* (www.girlguiding.org.uk/guidingmanual)**

Guidance and regulations on activities, residential events, home contacts and more.

Girlguiding website (www.girlguiding.org.uk)

Use the website search tool to locate the following online advice and free downloads.

- **Forms** - For all events and activities.
- **'Including all'** - Advice and guidance about how to make Girlguiding available to all girls.
- **'Reach more adults'** - Advice on how to recruit more volunteers.
- **'Funding and fundraising'** - Advice about grants, fundraising and other funding.
- ***Participation on a Plate*** - Resource to help involve girls in unit decision-making.
- **Emergency File** - Unit folder with all the information you need to manage an emergency situation effectively. If your unit does not have one, please contact guidingservices@girlguiding.org.uk. Visit the website to download replacement pages for the folder.
- ***Event Coordinator's Guide to Large-scale Events*** - Guidance for organising an event.

Girlguiding online shop (www.girlguidingshop.co.uk)

Helpful resources available to buy online.

- ***Going Away With Scheme* (order code 6478)** - Qualification for taking girls away on residential events.
- ***Going Away With Guiding* (order code 6045)** - Reference resource about planning and carrying out residential events.
- ***Health Matters* (order code 6454)** - Reference resource containing practical advice on preparing for health-related problems that can arise in guiding situations.

Appendix: Suggested kit list

- A daysack (waterproof or lined) for keeping things in and staying hands free.
- A waterproof coat or jacket.
- Something to sit on, such as a plastic bag or sit mat.
- Food and drink. This depends on where you are going and for how long, but a refillable water bottle is often handy. Check with the event organisers if there are any restrictions on what food and drink you can bring.
- Clothing layers for changes in weather.
- Any medication needed during the event, such as an asthma inhaler and travel sickness medication (these should also be listed on the Information and Consent for Event/Activity form).
- Sun cream, insect repellent and lip salve (depending on the event).
- A book or magazine for the journey.
- Spending money (it is usually best to put a limit on this and suggest girls bring small change if possible).