



# Thrive Outside

A 5 day residential holiday project for 8 - 12 year olds.

A therapeutic adventure, to help children grow in confidence, make new friends and try new things.

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



# Free to Be Kids is a charity which supports children's emotional health

We create opportunities for children to spend time outdoors, caring for animals, exploring nature, cooking together and having adventures. Taking a trauma-informed approach our projects are designed to support children to feel brave, make friends and be part of a team, particularly helping those who may be struggling at home, in school or with friendships. Our residential projects last for 5 days, providing a countryside break and a chance to relax and have fun, whilst also, through the support of our trained volunteers, helping children to develop confidence and build self-esteem.

Following this, there are opportunities for children requiring ongoing support to receive more targeted, intensive support through our mentoring programme and Journey Residentials.

## What our projects involve:

Free to Be Kids Projects are action-packed, therapeutically structured, nature-based residentials. We create a caring and supportive environment that is responsive to the needs of every young person, making sure they get the break they deserve.

Each day is filled with exciting activities including farm visits, beach trips, climbing, horse riding, swimming and camping. Adults are alongside every step of the way to encourage and activities are planned to challenge the adventurous yet be accessible to all, with patient support provided every step of the way.

Our trips primarily take place at our residential centre in Kent, about an hour's drive from London. 22 children come away with us at a time, divided into small boys' and girls' groups, each with around 5 children of a similar age. At least 2 adults work with each group to ensure that children are safe and supported to have fun. Each small group has its own bedroom, (with adult volunteers sleeping next door in case of problems in the night).



# FAQs:

## How do I refer a child to you?

Any professional supporting a child can complete a referral to Free to Be Kids. We ask that referrals come through a school, local authority or other organisation as opposed to directly from families, so we are linked into the child's wider support network. Our electronic referral form is emailed to all potential referrers when our referral window opens. If you are not yet on our Referrer Mailing List, please contact us to receive a copy of it.

## Who is eligible to be referred to a Free to Be Kids residential?

Any vulnerable or disadvantaged child, aged 8-12 by the project start date, living within a London borough may be referred. They may be struggling at home, in school or in their relationships with others. Within our allocation process, we prioritize children whose referrals evidence the highest levels of need, so it is important that you provide as much detail as possible on why a child is in need of our support. Sadly our projects are always oversubscribed, so children with lower levels of need, or less information on their referral, are likely to miss out.

## Which young people would not be suitable for a Free to Be Kids project?

Our projects are specifically designed to support children who might struggle within other mainstream holiday club provisions and we are able to manage most challenging behaviour. We regularly work with children with ADHD, ASD and ODD diagnoses. However, our staff and volunteers are not equipped to work with:

- Children who require regular restraint to keep themselves or others safe.
- Children who are unable to manage their own intimate care (bathing, toileting and dressing/undressing).
- Children whose communication skills or level of English mean that they are unable to follow basic safety instructions.
- Sadly, due to the nature of our activities and the constraints of our minibuses and project sites, we are unable to take children who use a wheelchair or have significant mobility challenges.

## What age must a child be to attend a Free to Be project?

Children must be between 8 and 12. We are sometimes able to accept a small number of new referrals for 13-year-olds if developmentally they would fit in with a group of 12-year-olds. Children who have attended our projects previously may be re-referred up to and including the age of 13.

## Does it matter where they live?

Yes, we only work with young people who live in London. For children living in outer London Boroughs, families or referrers may need to bring the child to a meeting place within inner London for the project pickup and drop off. All children in inner London boroughs will be collected and dropped off at their homes by minibus.

## When should I tell a young person's parent/carer about Free to Be Kids?

It's important that you ask the parent/carer's permission before sharing a child's personal details with us on our referral form. You will also need to check the child's availability and confirm this on the form. Whilst you must therefore have a conversation with the parent/carer before you make a referral, it is vital that you explain to them that not every application is successful and completing the referral does not automatically guarantee the child a place.

### What does it cost families?

Nothing! Places are offered completely free of charge to families. However, we do need a contribution from referring organisations to help us run the week. The contribution varies annually based on the amount of external funding we are able to secure through our fundraising efforts but generally represents around 25% of the full cost of the trip. You can find the current referrer contribution within our email communications about the trip and on the front page of the referral form.

### What is the process after I make a referral?

Please see our referral email for specific dates. Once the referral window closes, our team generally take about three weeks to read all the referrals and allocate children to projects. We will then email you and write to the child's parent/carer to offer a place if your referral has been successful. We will need the parent/carer to complete our online consent form in order to secure the child's place and will ask you to support us in ensuring that this is done before the deadline. In the run-up to the trip, we will speak to all families over the phone to answer any questions they may have and will follow up with a reminder call the week before the trip.

### What happens if a young person is not allocated a place?

Generally, children who are not initially allocated a place will be added to our reserve list. This means that if a space becomes available (even up to the day before the project starts), we may contact parents/carers to offer it to their child. In some cases, this uncertainty and potential short notice might not be appropriate for a family and we ask you to tell us if this is the case within the referral. We will write to all parents/carers with children on the reserve list to explain the process but would ask that you also talk to them, to ensure they understand the process.

### I have some questions - how do I contact you?

You can contact us by email at [referrals@freetobekids.org.uk](mailto:referrals@freetobekids.org.uk) or over the phone on 0203 778 0323 (this number is answered by a messaging service, but if you leave a message with your name and contact number, we will endeavour to ring you back as soon as possible) or visit our website: [freetobekids.org.uk](http://freetobekids.org.uk).

