

Buckden House

Land based activity – Operating Guidelines

Low Level Activity – On-Site Activities including Orienteering / Low Ropes Course / Problem Solving / Climbing Frame / Free Time

Hazards

In addition to the hazards that you identify at the time, please note the following:

Perimeter: pupils wandering off-site can easily get lost or encounter nearby hazards (road traffic, agricultural vehicles and machinery, strangers, rivers with deep and fast water, farm animals etc). A clear briefing should be given at the start of your visit stressing the need to stay on-site and not to climb fences or walls, or to go out through the gateways unless as part of a structured session. A familiarisation walk soon after arrival can identify the boundary and reinforce the briefing already given.

Safeguarding students' security: strangers can sometimes wander into the grounds, and visitors arrive at the main door. Be prepared to politely challenge their reason for being there. Visitors should NOT be allowed into the building or grounds without first checking with Centre staff. Strangers should be escorted off the site and details noted *unless* you are satisfied with their reason for being there, and/or you have checked with Centre staff.

A fenced –off area exists around the High Ropes Course and stream. The climbing wall, beams, stream, rope bridge and tunnels are an obvious attraction but can be extremely hazardous to pupils who should be briefed to keep out of this area unless taking part in an instructed session. They should respect the warning and keep-out signs.

Vehicles travel along the drive throughout the day and evening, and manoeuvre in and out of parking areas. Encourage pupils to be alert to moving vehicles.

The climbing frame is an attraction to youngsters. Slips and falls can occur. Use by Primary School pupils must be directly supervised. A 'buddy' system with one child on the ground to support their partner can increase success. Older pupils can be allowed to use the equipment with less supervision but you may wish to consider insisting on no solo use. The equipment can become slippery in wet / muddy conditions.

Archery takes place between the hedge and perimeter wall, adjacent to the main gateway. A red rope is placed across part of the lawn when shooting is taking place. Pupils should be briefed to avoid the climbing frame and roped off and shooting areas when archery sessions are taking place.

The Low Ropes Course and Problem Solving Exercises can involve jumps, height, balance and the lifting and repositioning of planks and other heavy items. Inattention or carelessness can result in injury to participants. Ensure that briefings are clear and be prepared to step in or

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support pupils to prevent accidents. Pupils' feet should never be more than 1.5m off the ground. If you are unsure of your ability to 'spot' individuals when necessary you should abandon the exercise.

Organised Games that involve running and/or contact should be restricted to pupils only; the weight and size of any participating adults will cause (potentially serious) injury to youngsters in the event of any collision. Parachute games require close supervision and effective control.

Operating guidelines

Whether you are familiar with the grounds or not it is worth your while exploring to (re)acquaint yourself with the current nature of the site, including sheds and pond, low ropes course, adventure playground etc. Some areas are out of bounds to you and your pupils and are fenced off.

The degree of supervision and briefing required will vary according to the planned activity, pupils ages, whether the session is structured or 'free'. If older pupils are allowed into the village unaccompanied you should consider a 'sign out' system to keep track on who is off-site, and limit the numbers at any one time to avoid potential problems in the shops and cafes.

Carry out occasional checks to ensure that everyone is accounted for; consider the use of 'pairs' when orienteering with young pupils, and on the adventure playground.

Staff

Leaders should have prior knowledge of any planned activities, and familiarity with the grounds, low ropes course, adventure playground as appropriate. They should be confident in their ability to manage and supervise their pupils safely throughout the session.

For structured sessions a staff student ratio of 1: 10 is recommended, although improved ratios are preferred. For general free time supervision you will need to take into account your pupil numbers, ages, the amount of freedom you have given them and your ability to deal with incidents and first aid.

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