

Gwent Outdoor Education Centres

Safety Policy, Procedure and Practice - Information for Clients

The Gwent Residential Outdoor Education Service caters for approximately 7,000 people each year and has been in operation for twenty years. We are proud of our excellent Safety Record which has been achieved through Centre Staff, Visiting Staff and all clients working in close collaboration and providing mutual support. All staff accept that the safety and welfare of the client is paramount at all times. The centres have been inspected by Health and Safety Executive and standards have been found to be satisfactory in all respects. The centres that provide adventure activities are licensed in accordance with "The Activity Centres (Young Persons' Safety Act) 1995. (details from AALA 02920 755715)

Introduction

As well as providing accommodation facilities for those groups wishing to organise and carry out their own programmes of work, the Gwent Centres offer a wide range of other services. These range from advice and assistance to those who wish to organise and deliver their own courses in environmental and field studies, to providing the expertise and equipment required by outdoor development courses involving, for example caving, rock climbing or canoeing.

As a result of this diversity, the direct responsibility for safety at any one time may lie with visiting staff or centre staff or be shared between the two.

Planning

In order to ensure that all concerned clearly understand their responsibilities we ask all party leaders to contact a member of the Centre teaching staff at least six weeks prior to their visit. Programme details and responsibility for leading activities will be discussed and clearly defined.

We recommend to party leaders that parents of any client under 18 are made fully aware of the programme to be followed and informed of the qualifications and experience of staff who are to

lead activities (see below). We advise parents that the Centres have adequate Public Liability Insurance. Personal Accident Insurance can be arranged through the Party Leader.

Clients will be asked to supply details of home and work telephone numbers of next of kin, the client's doctor and any relevant medical conditions.

The Buildings and Equipment

The buildings are regularly inspected by officers of Property Services Department of Monmouthshire CC and the Gwent Fire Brigade and we comply with all recommendations that are made.

All equipment provided is safe, well maintained and appropriate for the use to which it will be put.

Centre Vehicles

All vehicles are regularly maintained and inspected by the Transport Department of Monmouthshire County Council. All vehicles are fitted with seat belts for all passengers.

At the Centre

The welcome talk given by centre staff will include a reminder on the standards of conduct required of all visitors and a list of do's and don'ts specific to the site. This will be followed by a Fire Drill. All clients are expected to conform to safety advice given..

In the unlikely event of an accident, procedures are in place to ensure that professional help is always available and that parents are kept fully informed.

Activities Led by Staff of the Gwent Outdoor Centres

The teaching staff at the Gwent Outdoor Centres are highly qualified and experienced practitioners of outdoor education. Only staff with nationally recognised qualifications will lead hazardous pursuits such as canoeing, rock climbing, mountaineering and caving. Staff work to National Governing Body Guidelines. All teaching staff hold current first aid qualifications. A list of their qualifications and experience can be obtained from the Head of Centres.

Parents who may be concerned about issues of safety should contact Ian Kennett, Head of Gwent Outdoor Centres, on 01600750221.

Responsibility for Leading Activity Sessions

All programme activities will be classified as shown below.

Leadership of activity sessions must be confirmed and agreed by all concerned.

All activities within the scope of the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996 will only be led by Centre Approved Staff.

1. Activities led by Centre Approved Staff

The permanent teaching staff at the Gwent Outdoor Centres are highly qualified and experienced practitioners of outdoor education. Only staff with nationally recognised qualifications will lead hazardous pursuits such as canoeing, rock climbing, mountaineering and caving. All teaching staff hold current first aid qualifications. A list of their qualifications and experience can be obtained from the Head of Centres.

All casual staff working for the Service are thoroughly vetted and must comply with the same stringent guidelines that apply to full time staff. A copy of their qualifications and relevant experience is available from the Head of Centres.

Where it has been agreed that a member of the Centre staff will lead an activity session, then he/she will assume responsibility for the safety of that group

No activities within the scope of the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996 will be delivered under this category unless the member of staff complies with all the conditions set for the permanent and casual staff employed by the service.

2a. Activities led by Visiting Staff with No Centre Staff Presence

Where the centre has been booked on an **accommodation basis only** and it is agreed that visiting staff will lead activity sessions then that visiting members of staff will assume total responsibility for the safety of groups in their care.

2b. Activities led by Visiting Staff and Advised or Assisted by Centre Staff

Not including activities within the scope of the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996 (e.g. Programmes of environmental studies for primary children at Talybont Centre.)

It must be clearly understood that the centre staff are working in a supportive and specialist advisory role. The ultimate responsibility for the safety of the group remains with the visiting member of staff as in 2 above.

When activities are led by visiting members of staff (as in 2a and 2b above) then it is the responsibility of those staff to ensure that they operate within the remit of their training/accreditation, in a fashion suitable to their participants experience and abilities and in line with their own organisation's safety policy and the law.

Teaching staff at the centres will offer advice on nationally and locally recognised qualifications in Outdoor Pursuits and make available *Operational Guidance* notes which are issued to Centre Staff.

Advice on activity sites can also be obtained from the teaching staff of the centre to be visited.

Centre staff are instructed not to pass judgement on the capability of visiting staff to lead activities unless involved in a formal assessment procedure.

At the End of Your Stay

At the end of their visit, all visiting group leaders are requested to complete a questionnaire which seeks their opinion on all aspects of the service. Visiting group leaders are welcome to contact the head of centres should they wish to see all previous completed questionnaires. In the unlikely event of concern regarding any aspect of safety group leaders are requested to immediately contact the Head of Centres or one of the management team.

If at any time the Head of Centres or one of the management team has reason to believe that the safety of the visiting group is in jeopardy then they reserve the right to take whatever action is necessary to control the situation.

The high standards of safety adopted by the *Gwent Outdoor Centres* require that all involved in the welfare of the young people in their care must take every possible precaution to ensure that risks are minimised. We thank all visitors for helping us to ensure that our excellent safety record is maintained.