



## Gwent Outdoor Centres

Hilston Park O.E.C.  
Newcastle  
Monmouth  
NP25 5NY

info@gwentoutdoorcentres.org.uk  
Tel:01600 750221  
Fax:01600 750613

Booking Reference

- We hope that all is going well with the organisation of your visit to the Gwent Outdoor Centres.
- Detailed below are the contents of the attached 'bundle'. Please read carefully as much of the information relates to safety matters.
- The centre's teaching staff will be pleased to hear from you approximately six weeks prior to your visit so that final arrangements can be made.

### Contents:

- **Payment slip**  
Please complete and return with final payment **six weeks prior** to your visit.  
We appreciate that there is a lot of work involved in organising your visit. In order for us to be able to plan the appropriate resources for the programme to be successful we need to know **definite** final group numbers at this stage.

<b>Final payment date due</b>	
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You are reminded that full course fees are payable if cancellation is made after this date. Minimum booking numbers are enforced unless there is previous written agreement with the centres.

- **Safety Policy, Procedure and Practice - Information to Party Leaders**  
We are continually updating our safety policy. We would be grateful if you would read this summary of our safety procedures and in particular the section relating to responsibility for party safety.
- **Safety Policy - Information for Parents**  
It is recommended that all parents are kept fully informed on the programme of activities to be followed.
- **Equipment List**  
This is a basic list of equipment required by all clients on centre courses.
- **Client Detail Forms**  
For emergency purposes we are required to keep a list of all clients on site. Please photocopy this form as required, fill in the details for all members and bring the completed information with you.
- **Planning Checklist**  
We thought that you might find this a useful checklist. Please contact us if we can help in any other way.
- **Post course review form**  
Please return at the end of your visit to help us improve our service.

## **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 over 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).

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. 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.

### **Gwent Outdoor Centres - Equipment List**

For your own comfort and safety, we ask all visitors to bring the following:

- Minimum of two complete changes of warm clothes.

(We hope you have fine weather during your stay but please remember it can be cold and wet at any time of the year, especially in the mountains. Jeans will not keep you warm when they are wet. If you have other trousers such as tracksuit trousers or jogging bottoms please bring them with you.)

- Woolly hat and gloves
- Thick, warm socks (**NOT** trainer style socks)
- Underware
- Trainers or similar indoor footwear
- Towel and washing kit (please do **NOT** bring aerosols)
- Hand torch
- Large plastic bag (Bin liner)
- Suntan lotion and sun hat
- Personal medication e.g. asthma relievers, plasters, travel sickness pills and any other prescribed medicines. Please put your name on any medication.
- Single duvet cover and pillow case

### **Optional items-these can be provided by the centre but students may prefer to bring their own**

- Wellies with good grip

Please pack all the above in a **SMALL** suitcase or rucksack that you can carry!

There is no need to buy new clothing - old clothes are preferable for activities and may well get muddy!

- Please mark all items of clothing with your name.
- A drying room is available which will dry clothes overnight
- Televisions, radios or stereos and irons are **not** allowed.
- There is no objection to cameras, personal stereos or small personal computer games as long as the party leader has agreed to these being brought.
- Valuables or jewellery are best left at home for their safekeeping.
- Mobile phones are **not** needed. Reception is generally poor and each centre has a pay phone.
- A small amount of spending money might be useful (£10 maximum)

(Waterproofs, boots and all similar specialist equipment will be provided)

**Gwent Outdoor Centres - Course Review**

Centre:

Date of Visit:

Organisation:

**Please try to make constructive comments to help us evaluate and improve our service**

Did the course fulfil its aims?

1	2	3	4	5

Comment:

Welcome routines should be efficient. They should include detail of standards of behaviour, course aims and emergency procedures. How did you rate your welcome?

1	2	3	4	5

Comment:

All our staff realise the importance of customer care.

Were all staff helpful at all times, presenting a professional image?

1	2	3	4	5

Comment:

Was the programme at the right level for the ability of the group?

1	2	3	4	5

Comment:

Did the group review the learning ?

1	2	3	4	5

Comment:

Did the group enjoy the learning?

1	2	3	4	5

Comment

Our aim is to provide you with clean, tidy and comfortable accommodation.

Did the facilities match your expectations?

1	2	3	4	5

Comment:

Help us plan our future. What would be your priority for improving the accommodation?

We try hard to provide food that is nutritious, plentiful and meets the varying demands of our clients. How did we rate?

1	2	3	4	5

Comment:

What food would you change and what would you replace it with?

<b>Safety</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Were you ever concerned for the safety of your group?		
Was the equipment appropriate for the activity?		
<b>Administration</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
We aim to provide a personal service to ensure that you receive the programme that you require. Are our booking arrangements efficient?		
Were you contacted at least six weeks prior to your visit to discuss the detail of your programme?		
We realise the great effort that you put into organising a visit. Did our staff answer all your queries effectively and promptly?		
May we quote you in our advertising?		

If you have used a different provider for your programme how do we compare?

Thank you for completing this questionnaire and for your time organising the visit.

**Gwent Outdoor Centres - Writing a press article**  
**Top Ten Tips**

1. Plan first. You and the students work very hard to organise and make the trip a success. With all that is going on it's easy to ignore some of the additional benefits that the trip can provide. Build producing an article into the pre and post trip work done in school. It is a good opportunity to go cross curricular!
2. Include your Head and Governors-they should be asked for their approval. Invite your Head/Chair of Governors/Local Councillor to visit-they are likely to relish a photo opportunity.
3. Do some preparation. Find out local contacts for newspapers. Ask for their guidance and what would interest them. (Some contacts below)
4. Offer a photograph opportunity to illustrate and bring to life what you're saying in the release. Make sure you have parents permission before taking the pictures. The centres will give you access to a digital camera for the duration of your visit.
5. The first paragraph, or if possible, the first sentence of the press release should sum up the main point of the story. The introductory paragraph should be no more than 30 words long. Press release writing is very different to article writing and many 'time-poor' editors will instantly discard a release that doesn't get to the point.
6. Make sure you have included the 'who, what, where, when, why and how' of the story.
7. Keep your release as short as practicable – the journalist can contact you for more details if they need them. If you would like to tell the reporter about information that doesn't fit the flow of the story but is important, add it to the end notes.
8. What is the unique selling point (USP) of your release? What is the most important thing about it? Try to find the biggest, newest, oldest, smallest, fastest, done the most, celebrating a special occasion.....When you have decided, make sure it's contained in the first two paragraphs.
9. You're writing for the reader, not to show how clever you are. Know your audience. Adopt a friendly, warm and caring tone. Keep it bright, to the point. Decide on capitals, whether your organisation is singular or plural. Ensure consistent style.
10. Send the Communications Unit a copy of your release for proof reading and comments – it's very difficult to see errors in your own work! Communications might also know of a particular reporter or publication that would be particularly interested in your story. Always put the date, a contact name and telephone number at the bottom of your release so that journalists can ask for more information if they need it.

**And lastly...** Is it accurate? Does day of the week match date? Names spelt correctly? Figures right? Breached copyright rules? Anything libellous? Any vital fact missing? Have good dictionary and A-Z thesaurus handy. Cut, revise. Only then hit the print / send keys.

<b>Planning checklist summary</b>	<b>Done?</b>
Has approval been obtained to undertake the visit from an appropriate source (Head teacher/Local Authority/Line manager)	
Has written parental consent been obtained for under 18 year olds	
Is there a clearly defined party leader	
Are there sufficient staff to supervise the visit	
Does the visit have a clear purpose appropriate to the needs of the group	
Have appropriate transport arrangements been made	
Are suitable arrangements in place for an emergency contact 'back at base' for the duration of your visit	
Are adequate financial arrangements in place to fund the visit	

<b>At least six weeks prior to your visit</b>	<b>Done?</b>
Make final payment to the centre and confirm total number in your party	
Confirm programme of activities to be followed with the centre	
Confirm transport arrangements and arrival/departure times to and from the centre	
Ensure that client details are completed for <u>all</u> members of your party. (Include the staff) Bring the completed list with you.	
Inform the centre of any special dietary needs with in your party	
Distribute programme of activities and kit list to all members of your party	

'Ticking all the boxes' should help to ensure smooth planning of your visit  
 We hope your stay is successful and rewarding  
 Thank you for your hard work

