**SAFETY & RISK ASSESSMENT OVERVIEW**

**FOR VISIT LEADERS**

**Introduction**

The following information has been developed by Sandwell Residential Education Service (SRES) to provide schools and other groups with relevant and appropriate information for visits to **Edgmond Hall**, the Frank Chapman Centre, Ingestre Hall and Plas Gwynant, in accordance with the OEAP National Guidance.

See: [**http://oeapng.info/**](http://oeapng.info/)

This visit information is required by individual schools and groups to assist the completion of their own risk assessments prior to undertaking a visit. It also enables the school to adopt necessary control measures in managing health and safety risks relating to pupils and staff while they are at the Centre.

The information provided is intended to:

* Give reassurance that Health and Safety is effectively managed, and;
* Assist in the reduction of unnecessary paperwork in the planning and permission needed to execute a visit from a school or youth group.

**Risk assessments and national guidance**

Please note that **Edgmond Hall** holds the **Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge.**

National Guidance issued by the OEAP states:

***Q. “Do you ask to see a provider’s risk assessments?***

*A. Risk assessments tend to be technical documents.  Unless a visit leader is qualified to understand, assess and, if necessary, challenge them, there is little purpose in asking for copies. It makes much more sense to gain the information you need through a pre-visit or dialogue with the provider.*

*Nevertheless, providers tell us that they still get asked for copies of their risk assessments. We have therefore updated the documents*[*6a FAQ Asking for a provider’s risk assessments*](https://oeapng.info/downloads/download-info/6a-faqs-asking-for-providers-risk-assessments/)*and*[*4.4h Using external providers and facilities*](https://oeapng.info/downloads/download-info/4-4h-preliminary-visits-and-provider-assurances/)*to underline that there are more effective ways to gain the information that you need.* ***The easiest way to check that the quality and safety of most providers has been externally accredited is to look for the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge.”***

Our full documentation is readily available **only** at the centres and visitors are welcome to inspect it at any time. However, due to the size and waste involved in the production of copies, it will not be copied or sent off site electronically as it is out of date once issued. Many of these documents are what is called ‘living’ and are regularly or continually under review. Dynamic or active risk assessments are constantly made by staff whilst running activities.

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| **Safety Statement** | Sandwell Residential Education Service fully accepts its responsibility under Health and Safety Legislation. A Health and Safety Policy for each centre is in place together with written risk assessments undertaken in respect of our legal duties relating to persons other than employees (i.e. visitors) coming to the centre and using our facilities.  Your safety and health whilst at a SRES centre is a priority. We are owned and run by Sandwell Council, and work closely within their H&S framework. We take advice from professional bodies, including the Association of Heads of Outdoor Education Centres, (AHOEC); the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (CLOtC); and Sandwell’s Educational Visits Advisors, who are members of the Outdoor Education Advisors’ Panel (OEAP). We want to ensure that your visit is a fun, enjoyable learning experience, with excellent risk management.  We operate a policy for staff recruitment, training and assessment, which ensures that all staff with a responsibility for the safety and welfare of visitors / participants are qualified to undertake the duties they are assigned.  The following details are provided to assist you in completing your own school/group ‘educational visit’ risk assessment. |

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| **Background** | |
| History | Edgmond Hall has been run as a local authority outdoor education centre since 1937. |
| Venue Summary | Edgmond Hall is a converted Georgian farm in extensive grounds, with residential accommodation for 50 children, plus staff, in the main house, and a further 10 children with 2 staff in the adjacent cottage. Outdoor learning programmes are planned with group leaders and delivered by experienced staff, through a range of activities suited to the visiting group. Day visits are also available. |
| Visitor No. | Approximately 4000 per year. |
| Suitability | Ideal for children in KS1 and KS2; and a great venue for older groups. The cottage is adapted for wheelchair users.  The centre offers programmes of low-level adventure, themed courses, curriculum-based study and environmental awareness. |
| Contact Information | [jane\_maddox@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:jane_maddox@sandwell.gov.uk) office, tel. 0121 569 4440  [sue\_ray@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:sue_ray@sandwell.gov.uk) curriculum/programme  This telephone number is also the emergency contact number for schools and parents if they should require emergency contact.  If, during or after your visit, you have any concerns or experienced any problems regarding the management of the centre or safety and health of members of your party, please raise them with us. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these with you.  We encourage group leaders to arrange a pre-visit to the centre to familiarise themselves with the venue, staff, and procedures. |
| **General Information** | |
| Communication Systems | Mobile phone reception is fair on most networks. The centre has Wi-Fi and phones available to visitors. |
| Staff background/ child protection | All centre staff have been subject to full criminal record disclosures.  All centre staff undertake safeguarding training every 2 years. |
| Equipment | All equipment is regularly checked to ensure it remains ‘fit for purpose’. Results of inspections are recorded in an equipment log. |
| Emergency Evacuation | Emergency evacuation procedures are in place. All centre staff are familiar with and regularly practice these.  On hearing the alarm, which is a two-tone siren, all visitors must make their way to the dedicated Assembly Point outside the back-door fire exit. |
| Facilities for visitors with Special Needs | The centre tries to accommodate the requirements of visitors with special needs. Please contact us early to discuss these, and to help/inform specific risk assessments where required.  Schools and party leaders must ensure that suitable arrangements are in place in order that appropriate supervision and assistance is available to special needs pupils. |
| First Aid | All operational staff are first aid qualified and hold a current certificate. A duty instructor is on call either onsite or locally based for staffed/catered residential courses. First aid kits are located in the staff room. Local medical and emergency services are good.  On activities away from the main centre, instructors carry a first aid kit. |
| Centre Briefing | Soon after arrival all school groups will be given a detailed "centre briefing" covering fire, rules, emergency procedures and a wide variety of useful information to enable the visit to be safe, enjoyable and fun.  Any detailed medical or dietary needs will be discussed with the group leaders and appropriate provision made. |
| Insurance (Public Liability) | We have a public liability insurance of £5,000,000 and employer's liability of £5,000,000.  A copy of our insurance certificate can be provided on request. |
| Group supervision | **On activities** an instructor will be responsible for the technical instruction of the activity.  **A responsible adult group leader/teacher** will pastorally supervise all groups and group discipline will be the responsibility of that leader – who remains in loco parentis throughout the stay.  **Clear handovers** at starts and ends of sessions will be done by the staff to ensure everyone is clear where responsibility lies.  **At times group members will have "free time**". The centre briefing given on arrival will lay down boundaries and expectations; areas will be agreed with visiting staff appropriate to each group.  As part of the outdoor experience, some activities may involve young people "exploring" the countryside, e.g. orienteering where they will not be directly supervised by an adult. However, great care is taken in choosing the correct venue for remote supervision and a detailed activity briefing will be given to all participants. Participants will not be sent out alone - they will be instructed to stay in a group or pair. |
| Overnight | Groups are supported in evenings by the presence of a duty instructor. The duty instructor also sleeps in the centre in separate accommodation overnight; and is responsible for securing the centre and providing emergency support and advice to visiting groups. |
| Maximum Party Sizes | The main centre caters for up to 50 pupils/students and 7 staff.  The cottage accommodates up to 10 pupils/students and 2 staff. |
| Medical Needs | The centre should be advised at the planning stage if any pupil is known to have any specific or serious medical condition/need. We also ask that final Behavioural / Dietary / Learning information is passed to us two weeks in advance to ensure the safety of all participants. Parents are reminded to ensure the party leaders/school have the most up to date information.  We will, where it is safe to do so, aim to fully include pupils with specific or serious medical conditions within activities offered. This may require extra pastoral staff supplied by the group leaders. |
| Covid-19 | The centre has in place operational procedures and risk assessments in line with the latest guidance on Covid-19. These are revised and updated as the guidance changes. This information will be shared with school/group leaders prior to the visit, as group numbers and routines may be different from previous visits. Group leaders will be required to ensure that groups comply with the revised procedures. |
| Outdoor hazards | **The outdoor environment contains hazards** – uneven ground, tree roots and branches, slippery slopes etc, which are by necessity encountered during outdoor activities.  **At certain times of the year** some poisonous leaves, berries and fungi may be prevalent within the grounds, and in areas visited. Group leaders should advise all children that nothing should be picked or eaten unless directed by an instructor. Stinging nettles, and occasionally wasps and bees may be encountered.  **Seasonally, sun, heat and cold** need to be managed by appropriate clothing and protection. Sun protection is principally down to the group leader though guidance will be given by centre staff on methods of protection from the sun. **Hay-fever** can be a problem.  **Group leaders are required to assist** with safe group management where required, and to ensure that participants have appropriate clothing, protection and medication.  **The centre has waterproof jackets and trousers**, wellies, hats and gloves to lend to visitors who may not have brought their own, or who may need extra clothing. |
| Required Visitor Conduct | Visitors must   * abide by the rules and regulations given at the centre briefing and on notice boards * follow the rules, instructions and safety guidelines given by instructors on activities * follow instructions given by teachers/group leaders/instructors |
| Bedrooms | A bedroom plan will be confirmed by the group leader for allocation of beds for the group prior to arrival. This forms part of the centres fire and emergency plan – changes must be notified to the centre immediately. |
| Site Inspections of Centre Facilities / Areas | Centre staff conduct regular inspections of the facilities and an internal reporting mechanism is in place for any safety hazards. Please help us by pointing out any faults so we can rectify them. |
| Site Staff Identification | All centre staff will be introduced to the group at the earliest opportunity. Whilst the "duty instructor" is in charge of the daily routine, any member of centre staff can be approached at any time for assistance. |
| Vehicle Traffic | A speed ramp and signs slow traffic on the drive by the zebra crossing; a gate and off-set barriers slow pedestrians. Limited car parking is available. Coaches pull in at the top of drive to load and unload. Visiting groups are not permitted into the car park area. |
| Welfare Facilities | **Toilets and showers** are available for use by the groups at the centre. There is limited access to toilet and hand washing facilities in some areas of operation such as offsite walks or at the bottom of the 43-acre site.  **The kitchen** caters for a wide range of religious and dietary intolerances if informed in advance but does not provide a menu choice. |

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| **Areas of Higher Risk** | |
| Outdoor Activities | We hold the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge  **All the activities** offered are risk assessed, based upon current legislation, best practice, guidance and information.  **All activity leaders** possess the necessary competence, qualifications (where applicable) and experience required for the discharge of their responsibility.  **Decisions regarding the undertaking of activities** are made taking into account a number of factors including forecast weather conditions. When circumstances prevent an activity from taking place, we work with visiting group leaders to provide a suitable alternative. |
| Contact with animals | Petting and feeding of any animals is forbidden unless directed and supervised by an instructor. Contact should be followed by strict hand washing before eating or placing of hands in mouths.  Handwashing facilities, soap and paper towels/hand driers are provided for hygiene precautions at the centres. Instructors have access to limited hygiene facilities away from the immediate centre. |
| Residential Accommodation | **A fire risk assessment** is in place and is regularly updated. Regular evacuation drills are practised and fire exits, fire extinguishers and automatic smoke detection systems are regularly inspected. Evacuation procedures are displayed throughout all buildings. The fire drill procedure is explained in detail to groups upon arrival at the centre.  **Glazing** within the main centre accommodation is of a safety, toughened or laminated standard.  **There is provision** for safe storage of luggage, clothes, rucksacks and other outdoor equipment. There is adequate heating and provision for drying clothing.  **The centre is locked at night** by the duty instructor, who also sleeps on-site. Visiting group leaders will be told how to contact the duty instructor in the event of a problem or emergency.  **Daytime access** to the centre is restricted to specific doors, controlled by keypads. A Site Supervisor lives in an adjacent cottage. All visitors – including any visiting the resident group - are required to sign in.  **There is no provision for the keeping of valuables**. All visitors are responsible for their own equipment and valuables.  **Each accommodation floor has designated toilets, showers, and wash-basins,** with separate facilities for visiting group leaders. Leaders’ bedrooms are close to pupil/student bedrooms.  Additional toilets and washbasins are located downstairs and in the courtyard. |
| Own Clothing | A kit list of recommended clothing to bring for the outdoor activity course is issued to the school in advance.  Long trousers and arms are recommended even in summer as both sun and protection from scrub plants. |
| Proximity to Water | Some activities such as pond-dipping, and canal/river side walking, require care. Visiting staff will be required to help group management in these locations. |

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| **Other Relevant Information** (including items not covered above (including general hazards) or where details of any of the above specifications cannot be met) | |
| Many control measures have been put in place to provide an enjoyable but safe visit. It must be borne in mind, though, that the purposes and objectives of an outdoor education centre is to help participants experience a sense of adventure and perceived risk; and develop a sense of personal responsibility with the hope that this will help them learn and grow as an individual.  Whilst parental responsibility is represented by the teacher or group leader; and the safety and skills are the centre instructor's responsibility; group members are likely to have a certain amount of freedom during their course, suitable to their age/ability. During this time, they may not be directly supervised but are expected to obey the rules of the centre and to behave responsibly. | |
| **Signed** |  |
| **Date** | 18.06.21 |
| **Name (In capitals)** | Richard Oakes |
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