

**Adventurous Horizons**

**Safety Policy Statement**

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### 1a Introduction

This booklet is designed as a guideline to provide information as to how Adventurous Horizons operates in respect of its Expedition Programme operations and safety. The booklet is an insight into how:

- Events are planned and supported to reduce and manage risks to staff, participants, public and the smooth running of events.
- Participants are informed of the inherent risks involved in participating in our events, and what their responsibilities are when preparing for and participating in our activities.
- Event managers and other staff members should prepare themselves and operate whilst being an advocate for Adventurous Horizons Ltd (AH).

Areas that are covered in this booklet range from: responsibilities, safety whilst on activities, operating procedures, incident reporting and expectation of staff in general.

Adventurous Horizons Ltd is constantly progressing and improving and so the information outlined here is a snapshot of current policy and practice at the time of writing but is not intended to be fully comprehensive, nor to be constantly up-to-date. This document references other specific documents which may be more up-to-date (e.g. specific risk assessments or operating procedures). It is recommended that readers also check those documents. If you cannot find those documents on our website, then they are available on request.

#### These are:

- Appropriate Risk Assessments & Safe Operating Procedures
- Emergency and Accident Procedures,
- Incident Report Form
- Expedition Supervision
- Guide to assessing for Adventurous Horizons
- Late Back Procedure
- Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Concern Form

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Social Media Policy

### **AALA Licence**

Adventurous Horizons is Licensed by the Adventurous Activities Licensing Service (part of the HSE) to carry out Hill Walking. A current copy of our Licence certificate is available on our website and theirs. Licence No: L16334 Centre Number R2384

### **DofE AAP**

Adventurous Horizons is an Approved Activity Provider by the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. They audit us to ensure that our programmes and procedures will allow participants to achieve the educational outcomes they desire. Our staff must have strong DofE knowledge and preferably hold their Assessor's Accreditation. Our staff are advised that their primary responsibility on our events is Event Safety, Supervision & Welfare.

### **Insurance**

We are insured by Activities Industry Mutual (AIM) Public and products liability up to £5,000,000. Employer's liability up to £10,000,000.

## **1b Health & Safety Policy**

### **Risk versus Reward**

Unlike some industries where the goal is to reduce all risk to a minimum, in our industry: 'adventurous activities', certain hazards & risk is the goal. This is not simply 'thrill seeking' or 'boot camp'. Instead, we use challenging situations and activities to allow participants to learn how to prepare themselves for risk, and how to deal with challenging situations, as an individual and as a team. We seek to encourage both mental skills and practical knowledge, problem solving, teamwork. Our participants actively embrace the challenges to learn more about what they are capable of. Our staff will use challenge to help participants gain these outcomes for themselves.

### **Participation involves acceptance of risk and possible incidents:**

Involvement in any activity involves risk, especially unfamiliar activities in adverse weather in rural or remote areas. And so a certain level of risk must be accepted by all staff & participants involved. As must the understanding that sometimes, even with all the best staff and practices in place and being correctly deployed, incidents, accidents and illness will still happen and may not have been avoided. All involved have a responsibility to understand the risk before and during participation and ask for more information if necessary.

### **Participation involves acceptance of responsibilities:**

All staff & participants have responsibility to protect themselves and others from unnecessary risk and not to put themselves or others at more risk than is necessary for the activity. This may involve asking for more information, or asking to sit out of an activity, if they are feeling unwell or uncomfortable. It will also involve following all advice, instructions, and procedures explained in our documents, and by our staff.

### **Responsibilities of Adventurous Horizons Ltd:**

Adventurous Horizons Ltd accepts that its staff and participants cannot 'waive their rights' to be kept safe from unnecessary reasonably foreseeable risks to their physical and mental wellbeing. And so....

Adventurous Horizons Ltd accepts its responsibilities as an employer to identify these foreseeable risks and put in place safe operating procedures for its staff and participants. We must identify which risks we are using to aid educational outcomes and which risks we are controlling and minimizing. Adventurous Horizons will conduct its activities to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of its staff, those in their care and any other persons who may be affected by its activities.

Adventurous Horizons Ltd, also accepts its responsibility to gain 'informed consent' from staff, participants, parents and school managers. Informed consent means that Adventurous Horizons will provide all concerned with adequate information beforehand, to enable all to understand the risks involved in participating and to prepare themselves partake and reduce risks to themselves and others.

### **This will be done by the provision of:**

- safe equipment and systems of work.
- a healthy working environment with appropriate welfare facilities.
- sufficient training, information, instruction and supervision to enable all employees to avoid endangering themselves or others and to contribute positively to their own safety.
- Continually monitoring and evaluation of operations, events, practices and outcomes. And if the need arises, update and improvement of policy and practice.
- Adventurous Horizons Ltd reviews this policy at least every 2 years to ensure that it reflects changes in Adventurous Horizon's organization and management, developments in health and safety legislation and guidance from the HSE / ALAS.
- Procedures for recruiting, vetting and monitoring staff to ensure those staff hold the necessary, NGB qualifications, experience, first aid and Disclosure & Barring Service check for working remotely with young people.
- Providing schools, parents and staff with written information in the months and weeks in the lead up to events. E.g. Parents evening, Parents Booklet, Planning Day in-school, Student Handbooks, website access to these documents. Photos and videos of 'real situations / real weather' that have been experienced on expeditions in Summer.
- Providing Schools, parents and staff with information about how we set up and supervise events to enable 'remote-supervision' to be carried out safely for all on an event.

***"It cannot be stressed enough that the whole process of allowing groups to travel independently through open country in a safe and efficient manner is dependent upon a thoughtful and thorough training programme that shows careful progression and emphasises the need for effective communication both within the group and between group members and instructors."*** MLTE Guidelines

## **Section 2 Roles and Responsibility of Staff Members**

## **2a The Director (Kevin Beattie):**

Is responsible for ensuring that this Policy is put into practice.

Will liaise with competent persons to advise Adv Horz about measures needed to comply with health and safety law.

Has the main responsibility for monitoring this policy and associated policies/Risk Assessments/Operating Procedures, and implementing changes.

Will review, at least annually, health and safety matters, including problems, developments and achievements, within the company.

Will ensure that effective arrangements exist for the identification of hazards and the assessment of associated risks, so that appropriate control measures are adopted to eliminate or minimize significant risks.

Ensure suitable arrangements are made to ensure that freelancers are made aware of these policies and adopt these procedures through Induction training and regular reviews of practices on events.

Will ensure any accidents are reported to the appropriate health and safety representative within the appropriate LA / ALAS / DofE

## **2b Freelance Coaches**

We recognize that the key to safe practice in outdoor activities is the training, experience and competency of individual members of staff, whether full-time or freelance, who are leading teams in countryside.

Similar to most Adventurous Activity providers and DofE AAP companies, Adventurous Horizons, uses mainly freelance staff. Whilst these staff are on-site and working under our Operating Procedures, they are considered temporary staff. We hold Employer's Liability Insurance for this purpose. Copies can be found on our website. We have a pool of freelance staff whom we have 'vetted' and hold their records on our system. These instructors require appropriate NGB qualifications, First Aid certificate and Disclosure & Barring Service check, in order to work for Adventurous Horizons.

Any temporary employees (freelance staff) working for or on behalf of the Adventurous Horizons must follow safe working practices where reasonably possible. Our policies & procedures do not take the place of a qualified and experienced person's ability to make their own judgements in particular situations as it is impossible to cover every aspect of an unexpected situation.

Staff however are expected to undergo their own Continuing Professional Development, and keep up-to-date with our Safe Operating Procedures and to ask for information that they feel they need. And to feedback into our safety reviews.

All staff will be required to complete a Staff Details form and show original certificates for all qualifications held. Adventurous Horizons Ltd will keep a copy of all certificates on file. Instructors are

responsible for ensuring that their qualifications and memberships stay valid and up to date. National Governing Bodies may be contacted to confirm validity of awards.

Staff records check and safety changes update will occur annually, so that instructors are made aware of any changes to Policies & Procedures. Throughout the year staff will be kept informed of any relevant changes made to Policies and Risk Assessments via email. Staff and Instructors will be responsible for safety management during any sessions and will report any concerns to the Health & Safety Officer,

For any team who will be working remotely, Adventurous Horizons will require completed Medical Consent forms for all participants and provide those to team leaders, thus allowing staff to act in 'loco parentis'.

Adventurous Horizons asks staff to remember that they are representing the company at all times whilst at work and so they should act accordingly and professionally. We work as a team and as such if anyone has finished their work sooner than one of their colleagues, we all pitch in to help to ensure we all get the job done. If you are unsure of your role don't hesitate to ask.

Adventurous Horizons takes responsibility for issuing relevant policies and procedures along with Risk Assessments and medical information for individuals, however, staff must take responsibility for making themselves familiar with this information and returning it safely at the end of events (without making copies).

On the day of the event, staff are briefed by the Event Manager and expected to stay in regular contact with the Event Manager and each other using a whatsapp group.

Staff are expected to provide for themselves:

- Appropriate equipment for the job including a First Aid Kit.
- Own transport that is in good working order.
- Mobile phone

Appropriate personal and group equipment and clothing is recognised as the second most important safety factor and Adventurous Horizons staff will perform a kit & clothing check at the start of each event to ensure participants are safe to continue, given the weather conditions forecast. We will turn unsuitably prepared participants away, rather than proceed into unsafe weather.

Conservative judgement by members of staff on the spot is encouraged. The activity instructor has primary responsibility for the safety of the group. If you are unsure of the suitability of a participant's clothing and kit, you must check with the Event coordinator.

Staff are advised not to take a participant walking if that participant might foreseeably increase their risk to the rest of the group and the running of the event. The programmes we provide are meant to ensure participants take responsibility for their own preparation and packing. Participants that have not done that are refused participation. This is for their safety and the safety of the rest of the team, the staff and the overall running of the larger event.

A register of participants should be carried out if appropriate. This also ensures that regular counts of the group can be made.

## **2c Schools**

All our Safety Systems paperwork is made available to school DofE managers prior to creating a contract with us.

School managers are responsible for gathering information from participants about their medical and additional educational or emotional needs. And their emergency contact information. The school manager is responsible for updating this information before each event and informing us of any specific changes or significant issues for any individual.

Schools are responsible for dissemination of the safety information we give them to pass on to parents and students.

## **2d Parents & participants**

Are responsible for providing accurate and honest information about participant's medical details and emergency contact information.

Are responsible for updating the school prior to each event, if there are any changes to the medical conditions or emergency contact details.

Are responsible for providing participants with adequate clothing, equipment and food for the expedition conditions. They will be provided with information about what is suitable, in the form of kit list, advice booklets, in-school Planning day, reminder letters. It is parent and participant's responsibilities to read all of this information. This clothing and equipment (sleeping bag & mat) are the participant's primary method of protecting themselves from cold or heat, for the full day and nights.

Providing and bringing, individual first aid kit and medicines. Checking these kits and topping them up.

Having their child checked out by doctor or nurse for significant issues – asthma, spinal or joint issues.

Coming to collect their child at the expedition or hospital if there is an issue.

## **3 Other aspects of our Safety Operations**

### **Working with people with Special Needs**

People with special needs should be encouraged to participate in adventurous activities at every opportunity.

Staff members should be made aware and be able to cope with any persons who have any physical, mental, sensory and behavioural needs. The Disability Discrimination Act 2004 should be reflected upon.

Allow sufficient time at all stages of the activity. The roles and responsibilities between the instructor and the parent/group leader may need to be addressed before hand. Instructors who are experienced in this field will in general be employed but may not always be available.

Close attention should be given to medical and dietary needs with emergency procedures in place. A system of communication may need to be agreed, before an activity, between instructor and participant.

### **Child Protection**

Consent will be obtained from all staff for Adventurous Horizons to seek information from the Disclosure & Barring Services; any related incidences after such screening should be made aware to Adventurous Horizons.

All staff members (and volunteers) will be required to read, understand and follow Adventurous Horizon's Operation Procedures, Child Protection Policy and Risk Assessments.

Further information can be gained via Child Protection Training & Safeguarding Children Courses, which staff will be made aware of and encouraged to attend.

### **Health and First Aid**

All staff will hold a suitable up-to-date first aid qualification, and have a responsibility to gain knowledge of current first aid procedures. The level of knowledge will depend upon :

- Nature of the activity
- The environment in particular remote areas
- The health of the group

For all activities and journeys instructors should possess an appropriate first aid kit, with contents relevant to the activities they are delivering. Replacement stock can be provided by Adventurous Horizons. All Accident Forms will be reviewed and Operating Procedures and Risk Assessments adapted if necessary. The Health & Safety Officer will be responsible for reporting to RIDDOR any injuries or incidents that fit the criteria.

### **Retaining records**

Parental consent forms, approval forms, event specific risk assessments and associated programmes should be kept for the school year concerned and the following 5 years before disposal.

If a participant has received an injury they have until the age of 21 to submit a claim.

Any records, including parent consent forms, approval forms and risk assessments which relate to a HSE reportable injury should be kept for that length of time

### **Equipment**

Many outdoor activities will require participants to wear warm or waterproof clothing and footwear, depending upon the type of activity and the prevailing weather conditions. Adventurous Horizons does not provide individual clothing for participants. The programmes we provide are meant to ensure participants take responsibility for their own preparation and packing. Participants that have not done that are refused participation. This is for their safety and the safety of the rest of the team, the staff and the overall running of the larger event.

Adventurous Horizons does provide a team emergency kit which includes:

- GPS Tracker
- Emergency mobile phone
- Group shelter
- Whistle
- Foil bag
- 'What to do in an emergency..' cue cards (staff mobile numbers on these)

## **Mobile Phones**

Each group is given a mobile phone to be used in the event of an emergency or if they need to contact the staff. The Event manager is also given a duty phone. Prior to being released for the expedition each group phone is checked that it:

- is fully charged
- Has the Team Leader's number installed
- Has enough credit for the expedition
- Has been allocated to the team

The event manager also has access to each emergency phone number and to which team that phone is allocated.

At the end of each day the team leader will check each team's phone battery life. The phones stay on over night in case the team have to call the staff for help to their tent area.

At the start of each day of the expedition the Team Leader will check that each team has a working phone and that it is turned on.

*Refer to our Mobile Phone Policy for more information about how teams are to use phones.*

## **GPS tracker system**

At the start of each event team leaders collect the emergency pack for their teams and these contain the GPS tracker. It will be turned on already and should stay on night and day until handed back at the end of the event.

Staff will access the tracker information through a web browser page on their smartphone. This will allow staff to see an Ordnance Survey map with all the teams positions on the route.

Staff will be offered short training / refreshers on how to use this system. Staff will ask for help if unsure.

Staff will monitor the battery level and ensure that this tracker is collected from the team at the end of events.

*Refer to our Supervising Expeditions Procedures' for more information on how we use GPS trackers.*