

Generic Risk Assessment – walking in lowland / moorland / mountainous terrain

Next review – Nov 2023

Activity safety & rescue – general statements:

- Safety is everything you do beforehand and during events to prevent an incident/accident / illness / welfare issue. Rescue is anything you have in place to help deal with an incident when it occurs.
- Approaching event safety planning with an Iceberg model in mind is useful, but is improved by considering that ‘welfare of staff and participants’ is the base of the iceberg, then near-misses, will serve us better. If we plan all events in a way that staff and participants feel supported and confident whilst ‘on the hill’ then we should reduce the number of near-misses and accidents.
- Prevention is better than cure – this would suggest that it is the guidance we provide parents and participants with beforehand that is most beneficial. Guidance and training on the correct clothing, equipment, nutrition, to bring. So we insist on a Planning day (in-school) well before the first expedition. We provide follow-up handbooks and workbooks for participants to refer back to when buying and packing.
- The first line of defence for participants is not our staff and practices, it is the clothes, equipment and food the participants bring to help them stay healthy. It is the behaviour and attitude they exhibit to their team and staff. We provide plenty of information to explain that and then checks at the start of events to ensure these are in place.
- We ask staff not to turn a blind eye to poor clothing as this increases the risk to the individual, their team and the whole event. This is our workplace and we are working remotely where it can be slower and more difficult to get help, than most parents really want, when things go wrong. We can reduce the severity or likelihood of most incidents by ensuring proper guidance given before events, then proper checks done in car-parks before teams set off walking.
- This is an adventurous activity and some risk is assumed by participants. Removal of all risk is not only impossible but detrimental to the development of participants. Preparing for, recognising risk and dealing with it, is part of the training framework and outcomes for the events.
- Events are planned, months in advance, then reviewed in the week before the event (to consider environment) and then reviewed and adapted daily and discussed between staff team.

Instructors & team safety– general statements:

- Suitably qualified and experienced staff (activity award and current First Aid)
- Clear briefings and supervision. Staff briefing on environment, activity, timings, roles and responsibilities
- Phone and leader first aid kit are to be carried. As well as team emergency phones.
- Teams must always carry their group shelter, emergency phone, emergency pouch (that contains GPS tracker, crib sheet on dealing with emergencies and lost. And the staff phone numbers).

- All accidents, incidents and near misses reported and recorded appropriately and reviewed each evening and at the end of event. Any review recommendations implemented.
- All leaders should be aware of event emergency procedures prior to delivering any sessions – these are also available in the Leader folders.
- **Critical kit check:** It is the responsibility of the staff to ensure their team(s) are safe to walk each morning – check clothing and welfare each day. Never take any participant’s word for it, when you ask if they have something packed..... **‘If you haven’t seen it – they haven’t got it!’**
- It is the responsibility of the coach to alert the event coordinator of broken or damaged equipment, or injury or near miss and to record this information in the Accident and Emergency form (in the leader folder).
- Groups/instructors will have means of communication and know who to contact for help in an emergency

Hazard	Severity	Likelihood	Control Measures	Residual Risk Rating
Participants – a hazard to themselves or rest of group or leader. (lack of skill, knowledge, experience, clothing, equipment, nutrition, physical preparation, behavioural)	L-M	L-M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The parent & student documents (‘contract’) lays out expectations of behaviour, clothing, equipment, food – and explains that these are the first line of defence to accident, injury, illness and weather. Not our staff and practices. These ‘contract’ paperwork documents state that participants can be turned away or sent home if any of these things become an issue to their safety or the safety of others. • Participants are provided with guidance handbooks, Planning Day, staff training and checks to help them understand and meet these standards. • Participants are trained appropriately before the event and their competence to work independently is assessed by the leader. Monitoring continues in the field. • The supervision arranged is flexible and may become tighter or looser as the situation dictates. • Participants are in small groups, walking groups of 7. ‘Super-groups’ discouraged. • Participants are regularly sent home if they do not have their medications or safe clothing to 	L

Hazard	Severity	Likelihood	Control Measures	Residual Risk Rating
			go walking in the current conditions. This key to us protecting participants from themselves and protecting the staff and other participants and smooth running of the overall event.	
Falls / trips / sprains (flat/easy ground)	L	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking in a group can be problematic if the group clump together – this prevents them seeing the ground in front of them and can also trip over each other’s feet. Especially if they are focussed on talking to each other. • Activity Briefing – outline safe walking and behaviour expectations, and explain the reasons for these. • Insist on calm behaviour and spacing out. Remind group of importance of sensible pace. • Ongoing training in foot placement and movement skills. • Advise walking poles for those that it would be useful for. 	L
Terrain: Slips and trips leading to serious injury or death	M-H	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training in walking skills and briefing on crossing terrain as required. • Correct route selection by event planner and dynamically altered by leader if necessary to meet skill of team. • Correct footwear worn – kit list check at start of each event. Shoes not allowed. Boots (with ankle cuff) are required for all levels. This is explained in parent evening, Planning Day and student support material. Leader checks for laces and correct fit. • First aider with group with first aid kit. • The Leader to be vigilant and assess routes constantly and ensure group skills and terrain are closely matched and team upskilled if necessary or route adapted. • Route to be selected considering groups/individual’s ability, logistical considerations and weather forecast • Group to be made aware of walking poles in wild country or step path routes. • Assessment of groups and individual ability made prior to committing to a challenging route • Event staff to have a supervision plan in place. • Alternative/emergency routes planned where required 	VL

Hazard	Severity	Likelihood	Control Measures	Residual Risk Rating
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weather forecast observed and considered 	
Mountainous Terrain -Injuries associated with uneven terrain Exhaustion Psychological distress	M-H	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As "Terrain related difficulties" plus: Route / terrain choice made in relation to groups and individual experience of mountainous terrain Additional Training / briefings / spotting delivered as required Staff advised to carry spare walking poles and maybe confidence rope (min 8mm diameter x 25m length) in addition to standard group 	L
Injury from Road Traffic Accident	M-H	L-M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants reminded of road safety – care when crossing / walking on the right hand side / outside bend / use of torches etc Leaders to ensure that individuals are briefed about roads, and that routes are redirected where appropriate During remote supervision, the leader will always use this as an opportunity to use as a check point where appropriate Continued training / monitoring of staff on specific roads as required All staff to ensure participants are sensible and adhere to good practice. Roads identified in advance so that they can be staffed by instructors during morning staff briefing and supervision plan. Instructors to supervise A road crossings. Instructors to supervise B road crossings where it has been identified that it is a fast road. Leaders folder and staff briefing reminds leaders that students are to be trained in how to cross the road safely and walk along a road safely (and why this is important in countryside) Students wear hi-viz jackets and use their bright rucksack covers so that they can be seen if walking along roads that have been identified as high risk. 	Supervised Groups – Low. Remote groups - Medium

Hazard	Severity	Likelihood	Control Measures	Residual Risk Rating
Group behind / in front of schedule on route	L	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing group to wait at specific 'check-points' until staff meet them. • Realistic timings for groups. Groups briefed to wait at specific check-points until met by staff. 	L
Group navigation mistake leading to dangerous terrain (streams/crags etc.)	L-M	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of suitable venues for events. Route planning to take account of 'what if' scenarios. • Training in similar environments to qualifiers. • Participants trained not only in navigation but recognising risk of terrain, and dealing with that. • Staff shadow nearby and intervene if necessary to risk assess or re-route. 	L
Loss of contact between group / staff / assessor	L	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group briefed regarding escape routes, Emergency procedures, contacting staff, how long to wait until calling emergency services. • Sealed mobile phone in group with staff contact numbers (must be stressed not to rely on phone) Ease of access to route by staff • Staff 'walking' route to sweep for groups • Teams carry GPS tracker – staff in place to catch teams who 'over-shoot' / head 'off-map'. • Staff have ability to navigate / group meet staff on route • Equipment checks prior to leaving base • If telephones are carried group/staff have relevant telephone numbers of students in leader folders. • Emergency phone carried and group briefed as to when to use them. 	L
Adverse weather conditions	M-H	M-H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event planner to check and assess routes in week before event. Event manager to assess event and route during the event. Leaders to consider their team's clothing, equipment and skills match planned or altered route, and discuss any concerns or alterations with event manager. • Planned routes are good and deemed safe. Participants will not be allowed on top of any ridges if the winds are deemed too severe, Instructors are to check with event management if 	L-M

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			<p>they are unsure. Event managers to 'get out and evaluate the situation on tops' and to be cautious in these circumstances.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient instructor's ratios. • Foul weather clothing carried. • Check weather forecast. • Briefing. • Group shelter / emergency equipment carried by instructor. • Alternate route available. • The route goes along paths. Some areas at Gold and Silver level may require direct supervision which instructors will manage. • Appropriate clothing and footwear to be worn by all • Waterproof jackets and Waterproof trousers to be worn or carried at all times. • Team Leader to observe weather forecast prior to activity commencement. All facilitation staff to dynamically risk assess weather conditions, logistics and group dynamics on activity days. • Training in use of shelter, first aid and emergency calls to contact the team leader in an emergency; to be carried by all groups, unless on directly supervised walks. 	
Informal swimming, Presence of water – drowning	M	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never allow impromptu swimming or paddling (anything above knee high) • Wading is below knee – but remain below mid shin in any water situation • always risk assess the proposed venue in advance for currents, rocks, weeds, nature of bottom and sides – boots must be worn. • Extra vigilance by group, reminder not to walk next to water edges Avoid river crossings • Staff supervision where appropriate / check point • Individuals will be directly supervised during training time, All routes are checked and participants will be briefed on the dangers of waters, no water should be approached by an individual alone, There are not any river crossings or dangerous river banks on the route, During remote supervision, routes are checked thoroughly prior to all expeditions. 	VL

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas to be checked by event planner and event manager. Leaders to be made aware of areas with potential danger. Participants to be instructed on the dangers. • Weather forecast observed and taken into account with route choice / planning - River crossing options assessed and their likelihood of flooding considered • If crossing a river is preferable to being stranded due to water levels safe river crossing techniques should be used in line with NGB qualifications held by the staff on site/ guidance • Remotely supervised groups briefed on safety around water if in mountainous terrain. i.e. mountain tarns and streams. • Sufficient emergency food and fluids carried to allow group to extend their route to avoid river crossing if water levels rise. • Alternative route options considered for all routes where high water levels may cause problems • Ensure camp sites are not in flood areas of rising rivers/tides. 	
Waterborne infections	H	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry water from a safe source if possible • If 'wild' water must be used, consider use of water purification methods (filter & tablet) • Brief participants about safe choices and practical concerns for cross-contamination of treated and untreated water on their bottles and bladders. 	L
Hypothermia	M-H	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weather forecasts to be checked prior to session to allow for appropriate measures • Instructions on what to wear and what to bring is provided in the Joining information. This is to include food and drink • Sufficient layers to be taken by every group member – this is to be checked each morning. • The Leader to re-assess the weather situation and especially after midday. • Leader to carry extra gear. • Instructor checks group clothing and food and drink before setting off. And at each checkpoint, check participants are actually wearing their layers correctly. 	L

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goggles and trousers issued if necessary or participants turned away. • Drink plenty of fluids before and during session to remain hydrated (major cause of hypothermia) • Emergency food brought by instructor. • Teams carry cooking kit and fuel on every event to allow them to make warm drink. • Instructor to monitor mood of group members • Encouraging good eating habits during activities • Participants are taught Recognition of early signs and treatment during Planning Day and scenario training on events. 	
Heat exhaustion	M-H	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heat exhaustion is caused by long routes, on warm days with poor hydration before, during and afterwards. • Routes kept shorter, altered to find shade, or breezes. Regular breaks and water points. • The groups clothing will be checked and assessed throughout the day to ensure no one is over dressed for the heat. • Support material are provided to students about selecting appropriate clothing, clothing colour and material. Avoiding waterproof trousers over leggings. Light coloured head coverings are important. • The leader will check all students have a sufficient amount of water and the leader will also carry water. • Instructor monitoring group, group should be hydrated prior to session, 2 litres of water listed in kit list and to be carried. • Water drops available at checkpoints. • The Leader to check the group and be responsible for ensuring water is available. • Spare water tablets will be taken if remote areas 	L
Sun Burn	L – M	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suntan lotion, appropriate clothing and headcovers are listed in kit list and student support 	L

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			materials. Checked for in kit check at start of event. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents and students are contacted before individual events where risk is higher. • Lotion to be brought and applied regularly by participants. • instructors to remind participants to apply lotion. • only face or arms exposed. Vest tops not allowed on sunny days as burnt shoulders and rucksack straps will cause loss of skin. • Sunglasses advised for bright days. 	
Fatigue, Thirst, hunger	M	M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical assessments prior to departure. (route challenge matched to abilities) • Rest breaks. Welfare monitor is a role worth considering in team. • Food and water carried. Water monitor assigned in team. • Instructor vigilance and concerns reported to event manager. 	L
Aggressive cattle	M	VL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid grazing cattle in fields and on tow path side, especially when in calf or calving • Ongoing training in how to walk calmly through fields with livestock. 	L
Dog attack	L	L-M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow down whilst approaching dogs to allow walker to gain control of dog before group draws near. 	L
Injury illness or emergency	M	L-M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants trained in emergency procedure and first aid during Planning Day and then perform scenario training on their Training Expedition. • Scenarios are demanded as part of Assessment on Qualifier. • staff carry First Aid Kits and hold 2 day first aid qualifications. • Team emergency pack carried (Group Shelter, foil bag, whistle, emergency mobile phone, GPS tracker) • Kit list check requires waterproofs, extra clothing layers and food. • Leader establishes a system of regular text messages from team to inform on their progress 	L

Hazard	Severity	Likelihood	Control Measures	Residual Risk Rating
			and well-being. Leader also checks this in-person	
Medical conditions	M	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All leaders, assistants and participants must complete Medical form during planning / preparation phase. • Staff, participants and parents must be aware of the ‘need to know’ principle in order to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of all. Teams usually share their info with others in their team and discuss impact and treatment. • Management of any known medical condition is agreed with individual participant(s) and parent(s) before departure. • Leaders are provided with medical details in their leader folder and check medications are packed before setting off. • (note Asthma prevalence is 1 in 7 and the correct treatment of this in the first 20 minutes of an attack can save a life in an outdoor situation) • No-one is allowed to walk without their asthma inhaler or EpiPen. Parents are sent for. • If participant in a team has either an EpiPen or inhaler, then the team practice dealing with this as an emergency scenario on their training expeditions. • Leader folder contains note on how to deal with asthma attack (to be discussed with team). 	L-M
General public - Physical/ verbal abuse/ abduction of children/	L	L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff to be vigilant - politely ask members of the public to leave work area if necessary • Brief group on Countryside Code and how to avoid or deal with interactions with public or landowners and users. • Attempt to de-escalate any potentially confrontational situation if safe to do so • Be prepared to remove group to alternative area if necessary • Follow serious incident procedures and notify police if appropriate 	L
Blisters, cuts, sprains	L	L-M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team carry individual First aid kits and are trained how to use the contents. • Specific training on Planning day in preventing and treating blisters. Revised on Training 	L

Hazard	Severity	Likelihood	Control Measures	Residual Risk Rating
			Expedition. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders check that boots fitted correctly and quality socks worn. • Staff teach teams how to perform evening blister checks. First aid administered. • Issues monitored by staff throughout event. 	