

VINEY HILL CHRISTIAN ADVENTURE CENTRE

RISK ASSESSMENT AND SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

ONSITE ACTIVITIES

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DOCUMENT APPROVAL

Review	Reviewed By	Approved	Signature	Next review due
All Sections	Jon Holden Centre manager	Jun 2026		Jan 2027

1.0 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Control standard
Local safety management	Use this document as VHCAC local safety management guidance. It does not replace competent judgement, current technical standards, venue rules, insurance conditions or instructor dynamic risk assessment.
Instructor responsibility	The instructor remains responsible for dynamic decisions on the day and must stop, move, shorten or replace the activity where controls cannot be maintained.
Competence and approval	Activities must remain within staff qualification, current competence, VHCAC authorisation, technical adviser scope, venue permission, safeguarding procedures and first aid arrangements.
Challenge and learning	Challenge should be managed through progression, choice, group management and supervision. The educational value of an activity must never depend on tolerating avoidable risk.
Participant suitability	Review age, behaviour, medical, SEND, communication, clothing, footwear and confidence before the session and adapt as needed.
Equipment	Use only VHCAC approved equipment. Conduct pre-use and post-use checks. Defective equipment is removed from use, labelled/reported and not reused until repaired or replaced.
Safeguarding	Staff and visiting adults follow VHCAC safeguarding policy, maintain appropriate supervision and never rely on members of the public for group supervision.
Review triggers	Review this document after serious incident, near miss, equipment defect, change of site/equipment, technical adviser instruction, updated national guidance, or repeated behaviour/supervision concerns.
Records	Keep records of qualifications, first aid, induction, staff sign-off, inspections, incidents, equipment defects and post-incident actions.
Communications	Instructors should ensure they have an instructor radio with them at all times.

DYNAMIC OPERATING PRINCIPLES

Trigger	Required response
Stop / do not start IF	Thunder or lightning is forecast/observed; wind prevents reliable recovery to shore; water quality concern/algal bloom/dead fish/pollution warning; instructor is outside qualification/competence; required PPE/rescue/first aid/communication equipment is missing; participant cannot follow critical safety instructions;
Pause and reassess IF	Participants become cold, anxious, ill or distressed; groups spread beyond control; weather changes; any near miss occurs.
Emergency escalation	Remove immediate danger, account for all participants, administer first aid, call 999 if required, contact Centre, preserve scene/equipment after serious incident, complete incident/near-miss review before re-use where relevant.

2.0 NAVIGATION

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Control standard
Minimum lead competence	Basic navigation/map-reading knowledge, VHCAC in-house training and knowledge of the onsite course. Initial briefing for group led navigation.
Assistant competence	Assistants/group leaders briefed to keep groups together, enforce boundaries and return groups for regular check-ins.
First Aid	First aid cover available on site.
Instructor ratio	VHCAC maximum 1:12 plus responsible adult. Use smaller groups for younger children, poor behaviour, poor visibility or complex course variations.
Location of activity	VHCAC grounds only, excluding car park, roads, maintenance areas, private/staff areas and any other active activity zones unless specifically authorised.
Equipment	Maps/control sheets, pencils/markers, first aid access, mobile/centre radio where needed, weather-appropriate clothing and footwear.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Getting lost or separated	Participants	Children may leave boundaries or split up.	Brief clear boundaries, no-go zones and return point. Groups stay together; no one searches alone. Courses designed with regular instructor/adult check-ins. Instructor counts groups out and back in and keeps a visible base point.	Low
Entering car park, road or other activity areas	Participants Staff Visitors	Vehicle movement or conflict with other sessions.	Car park, driveway, crate stack, archery range, climbing wall, maintenance and accommodation areas are explained as no-go unless supervised. Controls are positioned away from hazardous zones.	Low
Slips, trips, falls on uneven or muddy ground	Participants Staff	Sprains and minor injuries.	Suitable footwear with secure fastening and grip required. Instructor checks route for mud, holes, branches, low wire/fencing and adjusts course in wet weather. No running on slippery areas.	Low
Poor weather, low light or heat/cold exposure	Participants	Cold, heat illness, reduced visibility.	Clothing checked before start; session shortened or adapted for heavy rain, high winds, thunder, icy surfaces or poor light. Sun protection and water breaks used in hot weather.	Low
Medical, SEND or communication needs	Participants	Delayed support or participant distress.	Instructor reviews medical/communication information. Participants who need support are paired with a suitable adult/peer and must understand the stop/return instruction. Medication is accessible.	Low/ Medium
Safeguarding and public interface	Participants	Groups may be out of direct line of sight for short periods.	Activity is set within agreed boundaries, with check-in system and responsible adults. Staff follow VHCAC safeguarding procedures and do not rely on members of the public for supervision.	Low

SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

Stage	Procedure
1. Set-up	Check course, controls and boundaries. Remove/replace controls that require entry to unsafe zones. Confirm first aid and centre contact arrangements.
2. Briefing	Explain map symbols, boundaries, return point, buddy/group rule, what to do if lost, no-go zones, respect for other users and stop/recall signal.
3. Delivery	Send groups out in a controlled way. Keep a list of groups, routes and expected return. Use regular return/check points for younger groups.
4. Supervision	Instructor and adults position to cover higher-risk boundaries such as car park or other activity zones. Adjust course if behaviour or weather deteriorates.
5. Close down	Account for all participants, collect maps/equipment, check controls are retrieved and record any incidents, missing controls or route concerns.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Card	Content
Emergency actions	Stop the activity, account for all participants and move the group to a safe place. Administer first aid, call 999 if required, contact the Centre office, preserve equipment/scene after serious incident, record witnesses and complete VHCAC incident/near-miss reporting before re-use where relevant.
Nearest help	Use instructor radios to request help. Minor injuries: Forest of Dean Community Hospital, Steam Mills Road, Cinderford GL14 3HY. Major injuries: Gloucestershire Royal Hospital, Great Western Road, Gloucester GL1 3NN.

3.0 GEOCACHING

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Control standard
Minimum lead competence	VHCAC in-house training, basic navigation/location knowledge and site boundary knowledge. First aid cover available on site.
Assistant competence	Briefed on boundaries, behaviour, roads/car park, device use and safeguarding.
Instructor ratio	Default 1:12 plus responsible adult; reduce where groups use devices, move partly out of sight or include younger/SEND participants.
Location of activity	VHCAC grounds and approved nearby woodland only, within pre-checked boundaries and away from vehicle movement and other activity exclusion zones.
Equipment	Pre-checked cache points, map/GPS/device if used, pencils/clue cards, first aid access, mobile/centre communication, weather-appropriate clothing.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Participants focus on device/clue and miss hazards	Participants	Trips, collisions, wandering into no-go areas.	Brief to stop walking when reading maps/devices. Caches placed away from slopes, roads, water, boundaries, archery range, low ropes/crate stack/climbing areas and private zones.	Low
Lost/separated group	Participants	Groups may spread out during search.	Buddy/group rule; regular return points; maximum time away; instructor counts groups out/back. Younger groups remain in direct or close indirect supervision.	Low
Slips, trips, stings, brambles and low branches	Participants Staff	Minor injuries in woodland/grounds.	Pre-check route and cache sites. Avoid dense undergrowth, unstable banks and thorny areas. Require suitable footwear and clothing.	Low
Public/vehicle interface	Participants Visitors	Collision or safeguarding concern.	Caches are not placed in car park/driveway or public access pinch points. Participants briefed not to enter buildings/private areas or interact with unknown adults.	Low
Weather/visibility	Participants	Hypothermia, heat illness, reduced safety.	Cancel/adapt during thunder, strong winds, poor visibility or icy conditions. Clothing and water checked.	Low
Hygiene and cache contents	Participants	Contact with dirty/unsafe items.	Caches contain only safe, age-appropriate items. Participants do not put objects in mouths. Handwashing after session and before food.	Low

SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

Stage	Procedure
1. Preparation	Pre-place or check caches on the day. Confirm all are within agreed area and not in other activity zones.
2. Briefing	Explain boundaries, buddy rule, device/map use, no running while reading, no-go areas, hygiene and return time.
3. Delivery	Set groups off in staggered starts or different directions. Monitor progress and behaviour. Keep spare clue/map copy at base.
4. Adaptation	Shorten or bring groups closer if weather, visibility, behaviour or public interface becomes unsuitable.
5. Close down	Confirm everyone back, collect equipment, remove temporary caches and report any route/cache defects.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Card	Content
Emergency actions	Stop the activity, account for all participants and move the group to a safe place. Administer first aid, call 999 if required, contact the Centre office, preserve equipment/scene after serious incident, record witnesses and complete VHCAC incident/near-miss reporting before re-use where relevant.
Nearest help	Use instructor radios to request help. Minor injuries: Forest of Dean Community Hospital, Steam Mills Road, Cinderford GL14 3HY. Major injuries: Gloucestershire Royal Hospital, Great Western Road, Gloucester GL1 3NN.

4.0 TEAM BUILDING

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Control standard
Minimum lead competence	Relevant VHCAC in-house training and site sign-off for the activity; current first aid cover available. Formal NGB/technical qualifications are required where specified for rope, cycling, archery or climbing activities.
Assistant competence	Responsible adults/assistants must be briefed on boundaries, behaviour management, emergency role and what they must not do unless trained.
Instructor ratio	Default maximum: 1 instructor to 12 participants plus responsible adult, unless a stricter ratio is stated. Reduce group size or add competent support for younger participants, SEND/medical needs, challenging behaviour, poor weather or complex activity layout.
Location of activity	VHCAC grounds, approved immediate surrounding areas and specific low-level team challenge locations.
Pre-session standard	Instructor checks weather, activity area, boundaries, public/vehicle interface, equipment condition, participant needs and first aid/emergency arrangements before starting.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Falls from low equipment or obstacles	Participants	Sprains, bruises, fractures.	Only use equipment/tasks within instructor competence. Helmets worn when feet are more than 3ft above ground or where head impact risk is identified. Spotting taught and supervised. Challenge level matched to group.	Low/ Medium
Misuse of ropes, planks, barrels or team equipment	Participants Staff	Struck, trapped fingers, equipment failure.	Instructor demonstrates safe handling. No throwing/swinging equipment. Defective equipment removed. Participants warned that unsafe misuse stops the activity.	Low
Slips, trips, wet wooden surfaces	Participants Staff	Common minor injuries.	Footwear required. Instructor checks surface condition and adapts/avoids slippery elements in wet/icy conditions.	Low
Poor behaviour, rushing or peer pressure	Participants	Unnecessary risk-taking.	Clear behavioural contract, challenge by choice, stop signal and active adult support. Remove participants who ignore safety rules.	Low/ Medium
Hair, jewellery, clothing caught	Participants	Minor injury or entanglement.	Long hair tied back, jewellery/watches removed or covered where relevant, loose clothing managed.	Low
Public/vehicle interface	Participants Visitors	Collision or distraction.	Activity area set away from car park/vehicle routes. Cones/barriers used where needed.	Low

SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

Stage	Procedure
1. Set-up	Inspect area and equipment. Define boundaries and remove hazards. Decide helmet/spotting requirements for each task.
2. Briefing	Explain objective, safety rules, lifting/carrying, no throwing, challenge by choice, stop signal and how adults will support.
3. Delivery	Progress from simple to complex tasks. Instructor monitors behaviour, fatigue, weather and emotional pressure.
4. Spotting/support	Only use spotting where staff/participants have been briefed. Adults must not physically intervene beyond their competence.
5. Close down	Count equipment back in, report defects and record any incident/near miss or behavioural exclusion.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Card	Content
Emergency actions	Stop the activity, account for all participants and move the group to a safe place. Administer first aid, call 999 if required, contact the Centre office, preserve equipment/scene after serious incident, record witnesses and complete VHCAC incident/near-miss reporting before re-use where relevant.
Nearest help	Centre office/instructor mobile. Minor injuries: Forest of Dean Community Hospital, Steam Mills Road, Cinderford GL14 3HY. Major injuries: Gloucestershire Royal Hospital, Great Western Road, Gloucester GL1 3NN.

5.0 TEAM QUEST

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Control standard
Minimum lead competence	Relevant VHCAC in-house training and site sign-off for the activity; current first aid cover available. Formal NGB/technical qualifications are required where specified for rope, cycling, archery or climbing activities.
Assistant competence	Responsible adults/assistants must be briefed on boundaries, behaviour management, emergency role and what they must not do unless trained.
Instructor ratio	Default maximum: 1 instructor to 12 participants plus responsible adult, unless a stricter ratio is stated. Reduce group size or add competent support for younger participants, SEND/medical needs, challenging behaviour, poor weather or complex activity layout.
Location of activity	VHCAC grounds and approved team game areas, away from archery, rope activities, vehicle movement and private areas.
Pre-session standard	Instructor checks weather, activity area, boundaries, public/vehicle interface, equipment condition, participant needs and first aid/emergency arrangements before starting.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Collisions, slips and falls during games	Participants	Bumps, strains, falls.	Games selected for group ability, space and surface. Running games avoided on wet/uneven ground. Clear boundaries and safe stopping distances.	Low
Over-competitive behaviour or exclusion	Participants	Emotional distress or unsafe play.	Instructor sets respectful behaviour expectations, manages teams, avoids humiliation, uses challenge by choice and adapts tasks for inclusion.	Low
Equipment misuse	Participants	Struck by objects or trip hazards.	Only safe, checked equipment used. No throwing hard items unless specifically part of a supervised, controlled activity. Equipment kept out of walkways.	Low
Weather, heat or cold	Participants	Fatigue, dehydration, cold stress.	Clothing/water breaks, shade/rest in heat, shorten session in poor weather, stop for thunder/high winds.	Low
Medical/SEND needs	Participants	Symptoms triggered by exertion or communication needs.	Check medical information; medication accessible; adapt activity intensity, rules and communication.	Low/ Medium
Public/other groups	Participant; Visitors	Conflict or collision.	Allocate clear activity zone and keep away from other activity areas, buildings and vehicle routes.	Low

SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

Stage	Procedure
1. Planning	Choose games appropriate for age, ability, weather and available space. Prepare inclusive alternatives.
2. Set-up	Check surface, boundaries, equipment and other site users. Keep first aid access clear.
3. Briefing	Explain rules, safe movement, respect, stop signal, boundaries and what to do if hurt/upset.
4. Delivery	Observe group dynamics, adapt challenge level and stop unsafe or unkind behaviour promptly.
5. Close down	Collect equipment, restore area and note any incidents or behaviour concerns.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Card	Content
Emergency actions	Stop the activity, account for all participants and move the group to a safe place. Administer first aid, call 999 if required, contact the Centre office, preserve equipment/scene after serious incident, record witnesses and complete VHCAC incident/near-miss reporting before re-use where relevant.
Nearest help	Centre office/instructor mobile. Minor injuries: Forest of Dean Community Hospital, Steam Mills Road, Cinderford GL14 3HY. Major injuries: Gloucestershire Royal Hospital, Great Western Road, Gloucester GL1 3NN.

6.0 ARCHERY

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Control standard
Minimum lead competence	Archery GB Instructor qualification or VHCAC approved in-house training for the specific range; knowledge of VHCAC range layout; current first aid cover.
Assistant competence	Assistants briefed on range boundaries, waiting line, arrow collection and emergency stop. They do not supervise shooting unless authorised.
Instructor ratio	Default 1:12 plus responsible adult. Instructor must be able to control all shooting, waiting participants and arrow collection at all times.
Location of activity	Approved VHCAC archery range/quiet area only, cordoned with warning signs and backstop/overshoot controls as locally approved.
Equipment	Bows, arrows, targets, bracers/arm guards, tabs where used, safety nets/cordons/signs, first aid kit accessible.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Misdirected arrow or shooting before command	Participants Staff Public	Potential serious injury.	Range set up with clear shooting line, waiting line, target area and overshoot/backstop controls. Arrows only nocked/shot on instructor command. Instructor maintains full control; emergency stop command briefed.	Low/ Medium
People entering target/overshoot area	Participants Public	Potential serious injury.	Area cordoned and warning signs displayed before activity. Other residents/groups warned as needed. No one retrieves arrows until all bows are down and instructor declares range safe.	Low
Misuse of bows/arrows	Participants	Puncture injury or equipment damage.	Safety briefing and demonstration. Bows always pointed down range; no dry firing, waving arrows, running with arrows or horseplay. Unsafe participant removed.	Low
String slap / catching clothing, hair or jewellery	Participants	Bruising, cuts, entanglement.	Arm guards/bracers used for under-18s and recommended for adults. Loose clothing controlled, long hair tied back and jewellery removed/covered.	Low
Injury withdrawing arrows	Participants Staff	Cuts, trips, arrow wounds.	Retrieve only on command. Walk, do not run. Approach targets from the side; one person pulls while others stand clear. Instructor supervises.	Low
Weather/wind/slippery ground	Participants Staff	Poor shooting control or slips.	Do not run in strong wind, thunder or poor visibility. Check footing around shooting and target areas.	Low

SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

Stage	Procedure
1. Range set-up	Inspect range, target bosses, backstop/overshoot, signs and cordons. Confirm no public access to danger area.
2. Equipment check	Inspect bows, strings, arrows, nocks, tabs/bracers and targets. Remove damaged arrows/equipment.
3. Briefing	Explain shooting line, waiting line, commands, emergency stop, bow/arrow handling and arrow collection.
4. Shooting	Only instructor gives shoot/collect commands. Maintain spacing and supervision. Adapt bow strength and distance to participant ability.
5. Close down	Count arrows out and in, check range is clear, remove signs/cordons only when equipment is secured, report defects.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Card	Content
Emergency actions	Stop the activity, account for all participants and move the group to a safe place. Administer first aid, call 999 if required, contact the Centre office, preserve equipment/scene after serious incident, record witnesses and complete VHCAC incident/near-miss reporting before re-use where relevant.
Nearest help	Centre office/instructor mobile. Minor injuries: Forest of Dean Community Hospital, Steam Mills Road, Cinderford GL14 3HY. Major injuries: Gloucestershire Royal Hospital, Great Western Road, Gloucester GL1 3NN.

7.0 LOW ROPES

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Control standard
Minimum lead competence	VHCAC in-house low ropes training and sign-off; current first aid cover available.
Assistant competence	Briefed on spotting, behaviour, helmet use and where to stand. Assistants must not spot or support beyond competence.
Instructor ratio	Default 1:12 plus responsible adult. Reduce ratio for younger groups, wet conditions, SEND/medical needs or elements requiring close spotting.
Location of activity	VHCAC low ropes course only; elements selected by instructor after inspection.
PPE and equipment	Centre-approved helmets for participants on course; helmets for instructors/assistants when spotting. First aid access.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Fall from ropes/elements	Participants	Sprains, bruising, head injury.	Helmet worn by all participants on course. Instructor briefs safe movement and controls number on each element. Spotting used where required and only after briefing.	Low/ Medium
Too many people on one element	Participants	Loss of control/collision.	Instructor controls loading on each obstacle and spacing between participants. Group waits in safe area.	Low
Wet/slippy ropes and timber	Participants Staff	Falls.	Inspect course before use. Slow pace and extra spotting in wet conditions; close or bypass elements that are too slippery or damaged.	Low/ Medium
Spotter/instructor injury	Staff Assisting adults	Strains or impact.	Brief safe spotting stance and limits. Staff/assistants wear helmets when spotting. Avoid catching falls beyond safe spotting role.	Low
Rope burns, trapped fingers, hair/jewellery	Participants	Minor injury/entanglement.	No sliding down ropes. Hands/fingers kept clear of pinch points. Hair tied back; jewellery removed/covered.	Low
Course defect or environmental hazard	Participants Staff	Equipment failure or trip hazards.	Pre-use visual check of ropes, posts, anchors, trees, ground and nearby branches. Defects reported and element taken out of use.	Low

SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

Stage	Procedure
1. Pre-use inspection	Check each element, ground, helmets and weather. Remove/bypass any element with defect, excessive slipperiness or obstruction.
2. Briefing	Explain helmet rule, one-at-a-time/spacing, spotting, no jumping unless instructed, safe dismount and stop command.
3. Delivery	Progressively manage challenges. Instructor positions to supervise most hazardous element. Adjust for ability and weather.
4. Spotting	Use only where helpful and brief participants/adults. Helmets for spotters and clear no-grab/no-catch limits.
5. Close down	Check course after use, count helmets, clean/store equipment and report defects or incidents.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Card	Content
Emergency actions	Stop the activity, account for all participants and move the group to a safe place. Administer first aid, call 999 if required, contact the Centre office, preserve equipment/scene after serious incident, record witnesses and complete VHCAC incident/near-miss reporting before re-use where relevant.
Nearest help	Centre office/instructor mobile. Minor injuries: Forest of Dean Community Hospital, Steam Mills Road, Cinderford GL14 3HY. Major injuries: Gloucestershire Royal Hospital, Great Western Road, Gloucester GL1 3NN.

8.0 SHELTER BUILD

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Control standard
Activity and venue	Bushcraft and shelter-building on VHCAC land and approved local woodland within the scope of VHCAC permissions and insurance. Fires and advanced bushcraft skills, including knives, are strictly VHCAC land only unless separately approved and risk assessed.
Minimum lead competence	VHCAC-approved instructor with current first aid, site induction and in-house bushcraft/shelter-building/fire-skills sign-off. Knife/tool/fire activities require specific competence and approval.
Assistant competence	Assistants/responsible adults briefed in fire circle control, tool exclusion zones, group behaviour, head counts, emergency roles and environmental protection.
Instructor ratio	Default VHCAC maximum 1 instructor to 11 participants plus responsible adult. Use lower ratios/add support for fire, tools, younger participants, SEND/medical needs, challenging behaviour or multiple build/fire zones.
PPE / participant kit	Suitable footwear and weather-appropriate clothing. Long hair tied back; loose clothing, scarves, jewellery and watches managed/removed around fire, tools and branches. Gloves considered for carrying rough wood.
Fire and tool controls	Fires only in authorised locations with defined fire circle, water/fire blanket/extinguishing method ready, clear supervision and extinguishing check. Knives/saws/tools only where specifically authorised, demonstrated and directly supervised.
Environmental controls	Use dead/fallen material only where permitted; do not damage living trees, habitats or protected features. Leave site tidy and safe; extinguish fires fully; remove litter/string/rope; respect Forestry/site rules.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Slips, trips and falls in woodland, mud, slopes, roots or uneven ground	Participants Staff	Common minor injury risk, especially after rain.	Suitable footwear required. Instructor checks site and sets safe boundaries. Running prohibited in build/fire area. Avoid steep or unstable ground and adapt activity in poor conditions.	Low
Burns from fire, embers, hot sticks, kettles or fire steels	Participants Staff	Burns, clothing/hair ignition or panic.	Fire only in authorised area with instructor in charge. Clear fire circle and kneeling/approach rules. Long hair tied back; loose/flammable clothing controlled. Water/bucket/fire blanket/extinguishing method present. Participants briefed not to bend over fire, wave burning sticks or remove hot materials. Fire extinguished and checked cold before leaving.	Low/ Medium
Smoke inhalation or asthma trigger	Participants Staff	Breathing difficulty or asthma attack.	Check medical information. Position group upwind where possible. Keep fire small and controlled; avoid smoky/unsuitable fuel. Participant may stand back/opt out. Inhalers/medication accessible. Stop fire activity if breathing concerns arise.	Low

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Improper use of fire steels, knives, saws or tools	Participants; Staff	Cuts, burns or eye injury.	Tool/fire-steel use demonstrated by competent instructor. Use kneeling/stable position, safe spacing and one-at-a-time supervision. Knives/saws only if specifically planned, risk assessed and directly supervised. Unsafe behaviour leads to immediate removal from tool/fire activity.	Low/ Medium
Shelter collapse, falling branches or unstable structures	Participants	Head/face injuries, entrapment or fright.	Instructor approves design before anyone enters. Use lightweight materials only; no heavy logs overhead. Structures not climbed on. Shelters must be stable, low risk and dismantled/left safe as instructed. Avoid dead standing trees/hung branches.	Low
Injury from sticks, spars, ropes and manual handling	Participants; Staff	Eye injuries, splinters, rope burns, hand/foot injuries.	Brief safe carrying: sticks low/forward, no swinging/throwing. Team lifts for larger materials. Keep fingers from pinch points; no ropes around neck/body. Gloves considered for rough materials. Build area kept tidy.	Low
Hair, jewellery or clothing caught in branches/tools/fire materials	Participants; Staff	Cuts, snagging, burns or strangulation hazard.	Long hair tied back and tucked away. Jewellery/watches removed or secured. Loose clothing managed. Scarves/hood strings kept away from fire, branches and tools.	Low
Poisonous plants, fungi, unknown berries, allergies or contamination	Participants	Poisoning, allergic reaction or illness.	No eating foraged items unless specifically planned, positively identified by competent staff and separately authorised. Participants briefed not to put plants/fungi/berries in mouths. Hand hygiene before eating; cover cuts/grazes.	Low
Wild boar, dogs, public, forestry operations or shared woodland users	Participants; Staff; Public	Distraction, animal encounter, conflict or machinery hazard.	Check site and signage; keep away from forestry operations. Participants do not approach dogs/wildlife/wild boar. Site boundaries set to avoid public paths. Staff maintain safeguarding supervision.	Low
Weather exposure: cold, heat, rain, wind or lightning	Participants; Staff	Cold injury, heat illness, falling branch risk or fire spread.	Forecast checked. Activity adapted/cancelled for high wind, thunder/lightning or unsafe ground. Clothing, hydration and sun protection checked. Fires not lit in unsuitable wind/dry conditions or where site rules prohibit.	Low/ Medium

SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

Stage	Procedure
1. Planning and authorisation	Confirm activity scope: shelter-building only, fire skills, tool use or advanced bushcraft. Check venue permission, fire/site restrictions, staff competence, ratio, participant age/needs and emergency arrangements.
2. Site selection and set-up	Choose clear area away from public paths, roads, water, dead trees/hung branches and forestry operations. Define boundaries, waiting area, build area and fire/tool zone if used. Ensure first aid and phone are available.
3. Equipment and material checks	Inspect ropes, tarps, fire steels, tools, kettles/cooking items and first aid kit. Remove damaged/frayed/sharp equipment. Use only suitable natural materials and avoid damaging living trees/habitats.
4. Participant briefing	Explain boundaries, safe movement, carrying sticks, rope safety, no throwing/swinging, no eating plants/fungi, fire circle rules, tool rules, behaviour expectations, wildlife/public respect and how to call for help.
5. Shelter-building delivery	Demonstrate safe structures and knots/lashings. Instructor checks each shelter before entry/use. No climbing, heavy overhead logs or unsafe enclosed spaces. Dismantle or leave safe according to site rules.
6. Fire/tool delivery if authorised	Use small controlled fires only in approved location. Fire circle supervised at all times. Tools issued/collected by instructor and used only in the defined area. Extinguish fire fully and confirm cold before leaving.
7. End of activity	Account for group, check for burns/cuts/ticks or other concerns, clear site, extinguish fires, remove litter/ropes/string, clean/store equipment, report defects and record incidents/near misses.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Card	Content
Emergency actions	Stop activity and remove immediate danger; for burns cool under running water for at least 20 minutes where practicable and seek medical advice; for fire spread move group upwind/uphill and call 999; for cuts give first aid and control bleeding; for missing participant stop activity and follow lost-person/late-back procedure; contact Centre and record incident.

9.0 BUSHCRAFT

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Control standard
Minimum lead competence	VHCAC in-house bushcraft training or Forest School/Bushcraft equivalent as applicable. Fire/tool elements require specific sign-off. First aid cover available; current first aid recommended for leader.
Assistant competence	Assistants briefed on fire circle, tool rules, boundaries, shelter inspection and group control.
Instructor ratio	Default maximum 1:11 plus responsible adult. Reduce for fire lighting, tool use, cooking, younger children or challenging behaviour.
Location of activity	VHCAC bushcraft/wild campsite and approved local woods. Fires, advanced bushcraft and knife/tool use only in authorised VHCAC areas unless separately approved.
Equipment	First aid kit, water bucket/fire blanket as required, fire steels/Kelly kettle if used, ropes/tarps/natural materials, gloves/tools only if authorised, mobile if away from Centre.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Burns from fire, embers, Kelly kettle or hot water	Participants Staff	Burns/scalds.	Fire only in designated area with instructor permission. Fire circle and seating/standing rules briefed. Water bucket/extinguishing means present. No bending over fire; hair tied back; no highly flammable clothing. Kelly kettle bung removed when heating.	Low/ Medium
Improper fire steel or tool use	Participants	Cuts, burns, eye injury.	Demonstrate kneeling stable position and safe striking direction. Tools/knives only if separately risk assessed, counted out/in and directly supervised at suitable ratios.	Low/ Medium
Shelter collapse or impact from sticks	Participants	Head/eye injuries.	Brief safe carrying: sticks low/downwards, no waving or throwing. Instructor inspects shelters before entry. Heavy/unstable structures not occupied.	Low
Slips/trips in woodland, branches/brambles	Participants Staff	Minor injuries.	Suitable footwear and clothing. Route/area checked for steep ground, dead branches, glass, wire and animal holes.	Low
Food/water/plant hazards	Participants	Poisoning/allergy /illness.	No wild food or water consumed unless specifically planned and led by competent staff. Allergies checked. Hand hygiene before food.	Low
Wild boar, forestry operations, public	Participants Staff	Environmental hazards.	Check signage/forestry work. Avoid machinery. Brief not to approach wildlife/wild boar and to leave area calmly if seen.	Low

SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

Stage	Procedure
1. Planning	Confirm whether session includes fire, cooking, shelter, tools or nature learning. Use only authorised elements for staff competence.
2. Site check	Check weather, wind direction, ground, overhanging branches, trip hazards, public access and fire conditions.
3. Briefing	Explain boundaries, fire circle/tool rules, carrying sticks, no tasting plants/water, wildlife, hygiene and stop command.
4. Delivery	Supervise continuously. Keep fire/tool group small enough for direct control. Inspect shelters before entry and adapt for weather/behaviour.
5. Close down	Extinguish fire fully, cool/dispose of ash safely, count tools/equipment, dismantle unsafe structures, leave site tidy and report defects/incidents.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Card	Content
Emergency actions	Stop the activity, account for all participants and move the group to a safe place. Administer first aid, call 999 if required, contact the Centre office, preserve equipment/scene after serious incident, record witnesses and complete VHCAC incident/near-miss reporting before re-use where relevant.
Nearest help	Centre office/instructor mobile. Minor injuries: Forest of Dean Community Hospital, Steam Mills Road, Cinderford GL14 3HY. Major injuries: Gloucestershire Royal Hospital, Great Western Road, Gloucester GL1 3NN.

10.0 TUNNELS

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Control standard
Minimum lead competence	VHCAC tunnel induction/briefing with Senior Instructor/Manager; knowledge of tunnel layout, exits and emergency access. First aid cover available.
Assistant competence	Briefed on entry/exit supervision, participant count, emotional support and emergency extraction role.
Instructor ratio	Default 1:12 plus responsible adult. Reduce for young participants, SEND/claustrophobia, night/no-light versions or challenging behaviour.
Location of activity	Artificial tunnel system located between Church Cottage and The Stables.
PPE and equipment	Helmets with working lights, spare lights, first aid access, participant clothing suitable for crawling.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Head bumps, abrasions and friction grazes	Participants	Minor injuries in confined space.	Helmets with working lights worn. Long sleeves/trousers recommended. Brief to move slowly, keep space and avoid rushing or pushing.	Low
Drops between tunnel and junction room	Participants	Falls up to approx. 50 cm and awkward exits.	Brief about changes in height. Younger/less able participants spotted/assisted at junctions. No access through hatches except emergency/approved staff use.	Low/ Medium
Emotional distress/claustrophobia	Participants	Panic or refusal to move.	Challenge by choice. Explain what to expect before entry. Allow opt-out and easier route. Support participant calmly to nearest junction/exit; do not pressure.	Low/ Medium
Participants leaving system or wandering off	Participants	Lost/safeguarding issue.	Entry/exit supervised. Head counts before, during and after. Clear boundaries outside tunnels. Groups managed in batches.	Low
Lighting failure or blinding lights	Participants	Disorientation.	Check lights before use; carry spare light. Manage light levels according to group ability. No shining lights directly into eyes.	Low
Medical/SEND or hygiene issues	Participants	Asthma, panic, allergies, contact with dust/grit.	Medical info reviewed; inhalers/medication accessible. Participants wash hands after activity and report cuts/grazes.	Low

SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

Stage	Procedure
1. Pre-check	Inspect access points, junction rooms, lighting, helmets and any loose/sharp edges. Confirm emergency access.
2. Briefing	Explain route, helmets/lights, crawling pace, drops, hatches, opt-out, no pushing, communication and stop signal.
3. Entry control	Send participants in controlled numbers. Maintain count and supervise entry/exit. Adults positioned to support junctions/exits where needed.
4. Delivery	Adapt lighting/route difficulty. Monitor anxiety and fatigue. Remove participant calmly if distressed.
5. Close down	Count all participants and equipment, clean/store helmets/lights, report tunnel defects or distress incidents.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Card	Content
Emergency actions	Stop the activity, account for all participants and move the group to a safe place. Administer first aid, call 999 if required, contact the Centre office, preserve equipment/scene after serious incident, record witnesses and complete VHCAC incident/near-miss reporting before re-use where relevant.
Nearest help	Centre office/instructor mobile. Minor injuries: Forest of Dean Community Hospital, Steam Mills Road, Cinderford GL14 3HY. Major injuries: Gloucestershire Royal Hospital, Great Western Road, Gloucester GL1 3NN.

11.0 NIGHT-LINE

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Control standard
Minimum lead competence	VHCAC in-house nightline training, route knowledge and ability to dynamically assess obstacles and visibility. First aid cover available.
Assistant competence	Briefed on supervision points, emotional support, blindfold management and emergency stop.
Instructor ratio	Default 1:12 plus responsible adult; reduce for darkness, complex obstacles, younger participants, SEND needs or woodland routes.
Location of activity	VHCAC grounds or approved local woods within stated radius, on pre-checked rope course away from vehicles and other activity hazards.
Equipment	Rope line, blindfolds if used, helmets if head-impact risk is increased, torches for staff, first aid access, mobile if away from Centre.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Banging head/body on obstacles	Participants	Bruises and minor injuries.	Route pre-checked. Obstacles selected and positioned for group ability. Long sleeves/trousers recommended; helmets used where head-impact risk is significant.	Low
Uneven ground, roots, mud and slips	Participants	Falls/sprains.	Suitable footwear. Course avoids steep drops, holes, roads and unsafe surfaces. Slow pace and one hand on rope unless instructed otherwise.	Low
Blindfold anxiety or emotional distress	Participants	Panic or refusal to continue.	Challenge by choice. Participants may remove blindfold/stop when needed. Staff provide calm verbal support and alternative role.	Low/ Medium
Traffic/car park risk for geocache/nightline variants	Participants; visitors	Collision.	Routes do not cross car park/driveway unless directly supervised and risk assessed. Use barriers/adult marshals if near vehicle areas.	Low
Group bunching, pushing or horseplay	Participants	Falls and collisions.	Brief spacing, no pushing, no overtaking unless instructed, stop signal. Remove participant who ignores rules.	Low
Weather/low light/forestry/wildlife	Participants Staff	Environmental hazards.	Check weather and route. Cancel/adapt for thunder, high winds, poor visibility beyond staff control or forestry operations. Brief wildlife/wild boar controls.	Low

SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

Stage	Procedure
1. Route set-up	Lay and walk the route first. Remove hazards and check visibility/emergency access. Decide whether helmets are required.
2. Briefing	Explain blindfold choice, rope handling, spacing, no pushing, stop word, obstacles, footwear and what to do if anxious.
3. Delivery	Control entry intervals. Staff position at higher-risk points. Adjust pace and route if participants struggle.
4. Supervision	Keep waiting group in safe area. Adults support behaviour and reassurance without creating extra hazards.
5. Close down	Remove ropes/blindfolds, inspect kit, count participants, report route defects/incidents.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Card	Content
Emergency actions	Stop the activity, account for all participants and move the group to a safe place. Administer first aid, call 999 if required, contact the Centre office, preserve equipment/scene after serious incident, record witnesses and complete VHCAC incident/near-miss reporting before re-use where relevant.
Nearest help	Centre office/instructor mobile. Minor injuries: Forest of Dean Community Hospital, Steam Mills Road, Cinderford GL14 3HY. Major injuries: Gloucestershire Royal Hospital, Great Western Road, Gloucester GL1 3NN.

12.0 ROCKET SCIENCE

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Control standard
Minimum lead competence	Relevant VHCAC in-house training and site sign-off for the activity; current first aid cover available. Formal NGB/technical qualifications are required where specified for rope, cycling, archery or climbing activities.
Assistant competence	Responsible adults/assistants must be briefed on boundaries, behaviour management, emergency role and what they must not do unless trained.
Instructor ratio	Default maximum: 1 instructor to 12 participants plus responsible adult, unless a stricter ratio is stated. Reduce group size or add competent support for younger participants, SEND/medical needs, challenging behaviour, poor weather or complex activity layout.
Location of activity	VHCAC grounds or suitable open ground away from roads, buildings, windows, overhead lines and other activity areas.
Pre-session standard	Instructor checks weather, activity area, boundaries, public/vehicle interface, equipment condition, participant needs and first aid/emergency arrangements before starting.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Being hit by launched or falling rocket	Participants Staff Public	Impact injury.	Launch zone and landing area established with clear exclusion area. Participants kept behind launch line. Rockets loaded/pressurised by instructor or under direct supervision. Countdown and all-clear used.	Low/Medium
Pump/pressure misuse	Participants	Eye/hand injury or sudden release.	Use suitable water-rocket equipment only. Instructor controls pressure limit and pump use. Pumps left alone while rockets are being loaded. Damaged bottles/launchers removed.	Low
Rocket misfire or failed launch	Participants Staff	Approach too soon.	Instructor sets misfire wait time and approaches first. Participants remain behind line until declared safe.	Low
Slips on wet ground/water spills	Participants Staff	Falls.	Launch area kept tidy. Footwear required. Manage water spills and avoid slippery surfaces.	Low
Weather/wind and overhead hazards	Participants Public	Rocket drifts or strikes object.	Do not launch in strong/gusty wind, thunder or poor visibility. Check for overhead lines, trees, windows and public access.	Low
Behaviour/horseplay with rockets	Participants	Struck by equipment.	Clear rules: rockets not pointed at people, no throwing/using as weapons, no touching launcher unless told. Unsafe behaviour stops participation.	Low

SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

Stage	Procedure
1. Site set-up	Choose open area, establish launch/participant/exclusion zones and check wind/overhead hazards.
2. Equipment check	Inspect bottles, fins, launcher, pump and hose. Remove damaged equipment.
3. Briefing	Explain falling rockets, launch line, pump rules, countdown, misfire procedure and no-go areas.
4. Launching	Instructor controls loading/pressurising or directly supervises. Use countdown and ensure all eyes on rocket.
5. Close down	Depressurise equipment, collect rockets safely, clear water/equipment and report defects/incidents.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Card	Content
Emergency actions	Stop the activity, account for all participants and move the group to a safe place. Administer first aid, call 999 if required, contact the Centre office, preserve equipment/scene after serious incident, record witnesses and complete VHCAC incident/near-miss reporting before re-use where relevant.
Nearest help	Centre office/instructor mobile. Minor injuries: Forest of Dean Community Hospital, Steam Mills Road, Cinderford GL14 3HY. Major injuries: Gloucestershire Royal Hospital, Great Western Road, Gloucester GL1 3NN.

13.0 ORIENTEERING

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Control standard
Activity and venue	Navigation/orienteering-style activities in the woods to the rear of the campsite and other approved lowland woodland/track areas. Activities must remain on clearly defined routes/areas with boundaries, escape options and staff oversight appropriate to age/ability.
Minimum lead competence	Lowland Leader/Walking Group Leader or above for off-site routes, or VHCAC-approved in-house local route training for defined routes within approx. 1.5 km of the Centre. Leader must have current first aid, local knowledge and VHCAC sign-off.
Assistant competence	In-house briefing for boundary points, group control, safeguarding, radio/mobile use, road crossing points and emergency/late-back action. Assistants must know when to stop a team or call the lead instructor.
Instructor ratio	Default VHCAC maximum: 1 instructor to 11 participants plus responsible adult, adapted for age, SEND/medical needs, weather, darkness, route complexity and whether participants work in small teams. For independent team navigation, use tighter boundaries, short time limits and additional staff at control points.
PPE / clothing	Suitable footwear with grip, weather-appropriate clothing, hi-vis where road/shared access requires it, torches if low light is possible, and any medication carried/available as planned.
Equipment	Maps/control cards/compasses as appropriate, charged mobile/radio where available, first aid kit, group list, watch/time limits, emergency contact details, route plan left with Centre, and spare clothing/shelter where conditions justify.
Stop / do not start if	Weather, darkness, forestry operations, road risk, group behaviour, missing equipment, medical needs or staff deployment make boundaries/supervision unreliable.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Participant or team lost/separated	Participants Staff	Safeguarding concern, delay, anxiety and exposure.	Use defined area with clear physical boundaries and return point. Route plan/controls approved by leader. Participants briefed on boundaries, time limits, what to do if lost, buddy rule and emergency whistle/call procedure. Staff/adults placed at key points as needed. Head counts and team registers used.	Low/ Medium
Slips, trips and falls on muddy paths, roots, uneven ground or slopes	Participant; Staff	Sprains, cuts and minor injuries.	Footwear with grip required. Routes chosen for ability and weather. Running prohibited unless specifically risk assessed. Hazards briefed; route adapted or cancelled for unsafe ground.	Low
Roads, tracks, car parks or vehicle movements	Participants Public	Collision with vehicle.	Avoid roads where possible. Any crossing is controlled by staff/adults. Participants briefed not to cross roads unless instructed/authorised. Hi-vis used where appropriate. Car park boundaries clear.	Low
Weather exposure: cold, heat, rain, wind or low light	Participants Staff	Hypothermia, heat illness, poor visibility and anxiety.	Check forecast and daylight. Clothing, waterproofs, sunscreen/water and torches as needed. Shorten activity in poor conditions. Low-light/night navigation only with specific planning, torches and suitable staffing.	Low/ Medium

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Medical event: asthma, allergy, diabetes, epilepsy, anxiety or SEND need	Participants	Delayed support if away from lead staff.	Medical information reviewed. Medication accessible or carried by responsible adult/staff. Teams/support adjusted for individual needs. Participants who cannot follow boundaries or emergency instructions remain with adult/leader.	Low/ Medium
Public interface, dogs, horses, cyclists or other site users	Participants Public	Collision, anxiety, dog bite or conflict.	Brief respectful shared-use behaviour: slow down, step aside, do not approach dogs/horses/wildlife, and return to staff if concerned. Avoid blocking paths and private areas.	Low
Wild boar or other wildlife encounter	Participants Staff	Startle response, defensive animal behaviour or unsafe detour.	Brief: do not approach, feed or photograph closely; do not get between adults and young; back away calmly and return to staff. Avoid dense undergrowth/resting areas where possible.	Low
Forestry operations, falling branches or environmental hazards	Participants Staff	Entering work area, impact injury, route obstruction.	Check for signage, closures, machinery and wind conditions. Keep away from forestry operations and unstable/fallen trees. Do not run activities in high winds or where trees/branches present obvious risk.	Low
Poor supervision of independent small teams	Participants; Staff Charity	Inappropriate behaviour, leaving boundaries, safeguarding or reputational issues.	Use small teams only where age/maturity supports it. Set very clear boundaries, time limit and behaviour expectations. Staff/adults monitor key points. Teams carry a control card and know return procedure. Failure to comply ends independent element.	Low/ Medium
Emergency response delayed due to unclear location	Participants Staff	Delay in treatment/rescue.	Lead has route map, group list, first aid kit, phone and emergency access points. Centre knows route/area and return time. Use grid reference/what3words where possible. Late-back/search procedure initiated promptly if team overdue.	Low

SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

Stage	Procedure
1. Planning and authorisation	Define activity area, boundaries, route/controls, staff positions, time limits, emergency access and whether participants will move as one group or in supervised teams. Confirm leader competence, ratio, medical/SEND needs and Centre notification.
2. Pre-activity check	Check weather, daylight, ground, forestry works/signage, roads/car parks and public use. Prepare maps/control cards/compasses, first aid kit, mobile/radio, group list and medication arrangements.
3. Participant briefing	Explain boundaries, buddy/team rule, staying on paths unless instructed, time limit, return point, road rules, public/dog/wildlife behaviour, what to do if lost, emergency signal/call, and how to report injury/worry/medication need.
4. Delivery	Use progressive tasks. Keep early controls close and easy. Staff monitor key points and head counts. Teams return at agreed intervals. Lead adapts/ends activity if weather, behaviour, darkness or public/forestry issues affect control.
5. Lost/overdue procedure	If a team is overdue, keep remaining group supervised, check likely route/control points, contact Centre, use phone/radio if available, and escalate promptly if team cannot be located within the agreed trigger time or if medical/safeguarding risk exists.
6. Completion	Collect all teams, check injuries/welfare, debrief learning, ensure equipment returned, inform Centre of completion, record any incidents/near misses and amend route plan if any controls were unsuitable.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Card	Content
Emergency actions	Stop activity and account for all known participants; keep remaining group supervised; give first aid; if someone is missing, check agreed route/control points while safeguarding others; contact Centre and call 999 if injury, significant delay, darkness/weather or safeguarding concern; give access points/grid reference/what3words; record timeline.

14.0 FOREST WALK

ACTIVITY STANDARDS

Item	Control standard
Activity and venue	Offsite lowland walking on approved Forest of Dean tracks, trails and local routes, including Christchurch, Mallards Pike, Beechenhurst and other approved areas. Routes must be within VHCAC approval, landowner/site permissions, insurance and staff competence.
Minimum lead competence	Walking Group Leader/Lowland Leader or higher for offsite lowland routes. Exception: walks within 1.5km of the Centre may be led by staff with VHCAC in-house training, route-specific local knowledge and Senior Instructor/Centre Manager approval.
Assistant competence	Responsible adults/assistants briefed in group management, road crossings, head counts, emergency roles, boundaries and participant needs. Assistants must not be given leadership tasks beyond competence.
Location of Activity	Woods at rear of VHCAC site
Instructor ratio	Default VHCAC maximum 1 leader to 11 participants plus responsible adult. Apply lower ratio/add support for younger groups, SEND/medical needs, behaviour concerns, dusk/night walking, poor weather, road sections or complex route choices.
PPE / participant kit	Suitable footwear with good tread and secure fastening; weather-appropriate clothing; waterproofs/warm layers or sun protection as required; medication accessible; drink bottles
Leader equipment	Charged mobile phone, route map/OS map or approved route card, first aid kit, emergency contact details, participant medical information, torch for low light/night, spare warm layer

RISK ASSESSMENT

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Participant lost, separated or group split	Participants Staff	Safeguarding concern, exposure, anxiety and delayed return.	Leader sets clear boundaries, front/back markers and stop points. Regular head counts, especially after junctions, toilet stops, public areas and route changes. Participants briefed to stop if separated and not to leave the agreed area. Route plan and expected return left with Centre.	Low
Slips, trips and falls on mud, roots, slopes, stones or uneven tracks	Participants Staff	Common cause of ankle, wrist and head injuries.	Route selected for group ability and conditions. Suitable footwear required. Leader briefs pace, spacing and safe movement on slippery or steep ground. Running prohibited unless specifically planned and safe. Route changed if ground conditions are unsuitable.	Low
Weather exposure: cold, rain, wind, heat, sun or lightning	Participants Staff	Hypothermia, heat illness, dehydration or lightning exposure.	Forecast and observed conditions checked. Clothing, waterproofs, warm layers, sun protection and water checked before departure. Walk adapted/shortened/cancelled for unsuitable conditions. No exposed walking during thunder/lightning.	Low/ Medium

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Risk without controls	Mandatory controls	Residual risk
Exhaustion, dehydration or unsuitable route demand	Participants	Fatigue/distress, medical deterioration and slow return.	Route planned to participant age, fitness, ability and time available. Regular breaks, food and drink encouraged. Leader monitors pace and signs of fatigue; route shortened or evacuation plan used if needed.	Low
Roadside walking, crossings, car parks and vehicle movements	Participants Staff Public	Traffic collision or unsafe boarding or alighting.	Use paths/trails away from roads where possible. For road sections walk single file as appropriate, face oncoming traffic where suitable, use high visibility/torches in poor light, and cross only under leader instruction. Minibus parking/drop-off planned safely.	Low
Medical event, allergy, asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, panic, communication need	Participants	Could deteriorate away from Centre.	Medical and consent information reviewed; essential medication accessible. Responsible adult confirms known triggers/support needs. Leader adapts pace, instructions and route. First aid kit and phone carried.	Low/ Medium
Public interface: walkers, dogs, cyclists, horse riders and shared paths	Participants Staff Public	Conflict, falls, dog bites or safeguarding distraction.	Group keeps to one side and gives way where appropriate. Participants briefed not to approach or run from dogs. Leaders maintain supervision and do not rely on members of the public for group control.	Low
Wild boar, wildlife and livestock	Participants Staff	Startle, defensive animal behaviour, injury/distress.	Avoid dense undergrowth and known wildlife disturbance areas. Do not approach, feed or photograph closely. Keep group together; retreat calmly, give animals a wide berth	Low
Forestry operations, blocked paths or environmental hazards	Participants Staff	Machinery, falling trees, route closure or conflict with forestry work.	Check signage and local information. Keep away from machinery, timber stacks and closed areas. Re-route or abandon walk where forestry operations or unsafe conditions are present.	Low

SAFETY OPERATING PROCEDURES

Stage	Procedure
1. Planning and authorisation	Select approved route appropriate to group, weather, daylight and leader competence. Confirm transport, permissions, staff ratio, participant needs and emergency arrangements. Leave route, location, staff names, participant numbers and expected return time with the Centre.
2. Pre-activity checks	Check forecast, daylight, route condition, footwear/clothing, medication, food/drink, first aid kit, phone charge and emergency contacts. Confirm nearest access point/road for emergency services where relevant.
3. Participant briefing	Explain route boundaries, walking pace, stop signals, head counts, what to do if separated, road/crossing rules, dogs/wildlife, public path etiquette, hydration and telling staff early if cold, tired, unwell or worried.
4. Group management	Use leader/front and assistant/back-marker where possible. Maintain line of sight or clear regrouping points. Head counts at start, junctions, breaks, road crossings and end. Adapt pace to the slowest participant.
5. Dynamic risk assessment	Continuously monitor weather, light, group condition, behaviour, ground conditions, public interface and forestry activity. Shorten, divert or stop if the route no longer remains within safe controls.
6. End of activity	Account for all participants, check for injuries/concerns, report near misses, replace first aid items, record route changes or incidents and confirm safe return to Centre.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Card	Content
Emergency actions	Stop group safely; account for all; give first aid; call 999 with location; contact Centre; record facts afterwards.