



Noah's Ark Children's Venture
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Health & Safety Manual

A guide for group workers and others
staying at the Centre

It is important that everyone working with and responsible for groups of children, young people and adults using the Centre should read this booklet on each occasion that they visit the Centre as it is constantly being updated.

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Health and Safety Policy Statement

Health and Safety at Work Act 1974

This is the Health and Safety Policy Statement of

Noah's Ark Children's Venture

Our statement of general policy is:

- To provide adequate control of the health and safety risks arising from a residential visit to the Centre at Macaroni Wood
- To provide and maintain safe plant and equipment
- To provide information and support to group workers
- To maintain safe and healthy working conditions
- To review and revise this policy as necessary at regular intervals

THE SITE & OTHER ISSUES

The boundaries and where you can and can't go

Noah's Ark Children's Venture **does not own** Macaroni Wood. We lease the buildings and 6 acres of the woodland from the Hatherop Estate which owns most of the land in the immediate area of Macaroni Wood.

Macaroni Wood is quite large – 60 acres in total. Our area, to the back of Castree House, comprises 6 acres and is the only area where groups are allowed to wander freely. Please do not wander into any areas of woodland apart from this area to the back of Castree House. We will soon take over the responsibility for a further area of woodland adjacent to Castree House. We will be taking advice from nature conservation organisations about how to manage this area of woodland (approx. a further 12 acres) so that everyone gains maximum benefit including the wildlife and plants that live and grow in Macaroni Wood.

You can cycle on the tarmac paths that form a figure of eight in the middle of the wood and on the paths to the main roads on the edge of the wood. You must not take the bikes out of Macaroni Wood without informing the Centre Manager beforehand.

Please be aware that there are two ponds in Macaroni Wood. The one on our site is fenced off but the other is not as it is in an area not covered by our lease where group members are not allowed to go and therefore not our responsibility

The Centre Manager will inform your group in his introductory talk of the limits of the site but you must reinforce this message to your group throughout your residential visit particularly when they are allowed free time to play and are using the bikes.

You will notice a large water tower on the right hand side as you get to the top of the drive. Please ensure that no-one goes near this structure.

Other people in Macaroni Wood

There are a number of organisations that work and live in Macaroni Wood. The Guide & Brownie Association has a residential centre similar to ours in Macaroni Wood. Whilst it is generally used only in the summer months please be aware that during these periods there are young children staying there and respect their needs for privacy and quiet – especially at night. If you take your group out on a night walk please ensure that you do not go past the Brownie camp late at night and keep noise levels down to a minimum.

There are also a number of businesses who operate from Macaroni Wood. These include a wood yard, a garage, an antiques restoration workshop and an artist's workshop. The Hatherop Estate have plans to open further workshops in the future and so it is important that everyone respects the property of other people in the wood and not enter any areas other than those described above.

Supervision

It is the group leaders and workers responsibility to ensure the health and safety of the members of their groups whilst they are staying at the Centre and in particular when they are playing outside. A member of staff should be outside at all times that their group is allowed free access to the site i.e. using the playground areas, the BMX track, cycling, etc. and all group members should be fully aware of the limits to where they can go in Macaroni Wood and to how they should behave towards other people and their property. When using the caravan as part of a residential visit minimum staffing levels require that two members of staff be present if children are staying in the caravan.

Mobile phones

There is limited network access to mobile phones at Macaroni Wood from nearly all providers. Despite this restricted access to the network a number of groups have had on occasion problems arising from children and young people using mobile phones whilst staying at the Centre. We feel that it is worth group leaders considering whether free access to mobile phones is appropriate during a residential visit.

Child Protection Policy

Noah's Ark Children's Venture has a designated child protection policy and a child protection officer who is a member of the management committee. A copy of the policy is available on request from the centre managers or can be viewed from the home page of the website. In the event of any incident involving child protection issues occurring at the centre during your residential visit, it is the duty of the group leader to inform the centre managers immediately.

Use of Photographs and Video

For the purposes of information and publicity, NACV does on occasion use photographs and video of children and young people taking part in activities at the Centre. NACV will take all steps to ensure these images are used solely for the purposes they are intended. If you become aware that these images are being used inappropriately you should inform NACV immediately. In accordance with our child protection policy we will not permit photographs, video or other images of children and young people to be taken without their consent or the consent of their carers. Group leaders should inform Richard and Liz if parents or carers of children and young people in their charge whilst staying at Macaroni Wood are unwilling to consent for their children's images to be used by NACV for publicity purposes.

Insurance

Noah's Ark Children's Venture has public liability insurance and employer's liability insurance.

We advise all groups to take out their own public liability insurance to cover activities undertaken both on and off the site where supervision is the responsibility of the group workers e.g. ice skating, swimming etc. Noah's Ark

does not provide cover for activities that its employees do not supervise – e.g. playing on the swings, playing on the trampoline and riding the bikes. All group workers should ensure that they are covered by public liability insurance when supervising activities undertaken by all the clients who they bring to the Centre.

If you do not have public liability cover and experience difficulty in obtaining cover please contact the Centre. We will be happy to put you in touch with a suitable broker.

Provided you fulfil our requirements to drive the Centre's minibus our insurance will cover you to do so. Further details on using the minibus are included further on.

Noah's Ark Children's Venture does not have insurance cover against theft for any contents in Bazley or Castree House. This includes personal property brought to the Centre by our visitors.

STAYING AT THE CENTRE

Bazley and Castree House are regularly inspected by the Centre Managers as part of our health & safety risk assessment procedures. Any necessary repairs or maintenance are duly noted and carried out as needed. If you see anything faulty or a breakage occurs during your stay please inform them as soon as possible.

Issues that you need to be aware of when staying in either of the houses at the Centre are as follows:

Fire regulations

Both houses are fully equipped with a fire alarm system, emergency lighting, smoke detectors and the appropriate number of fire extinguishers.

In his introductory talk the Centre Manager will inform you of the procedure to follow should there be a fire in either of the houses and a fire action certificate is on display on the notice board in the kitchen of both Castree and Bazley House to remind you of these points.

It is important that group leaders have a full list of names and addresses of all members of their group so that they can be checked off during a fire practice. The fire assembly point is the front lawn of Bazley House.

Each group must appoint a fire marshall to supervise the evacuation of the building should it be necessary.

Smoking is not allowed in any of the buildings at the Centre and the alarm system will be activated if anyone does smoke indoors.

First Aid

Both houses have first aid kits but each group should have their own first aid kit that is available for off site trips. The Centre Manager (Richard Wilkinson) has a qualification in first aid at work however he is not always available and we advise each group to have their own qualified first aider within their staff team. If medical treatment is necessary then there is a doctors surgery in Fairford and Accident & Emergency departments in the hospitals at Cirencester (daytime hours only) Swindon and Cheltenham. Details are on the notice boards in both buildings.

Any medication brought to the Centre for individual group members should be stored safely in an appropriate place. Group leaders should be fully aware of the medication needs of individuals under their supervision and ensure that they have brought adequate supplies with them.

Living & working at the Centre

Every effort is made to ensure that the houses are clean and tidy when you arrive. We are a small organisation with only two members of staff and have a large turnover of groups in the summer months. It is your responsibility to maintain the building in a clean and safe manner throughout your stay and to leave the building in the same clean and tidy conditions as you found it.

Basic household cleaning materials are provided. Certain cleaning materials i.e. bleach and ammonia based products are not left in the store cupboards as they are covered by COSHH legislation (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) Please keep all cleaning materials out of reach if you have very young children in your group. The kitchen will be clean and tidy when you arrive and a few guidelines as provided by the Food Safety Act 1990 may be of help in ensuring that any risk to health from unsafe food is avoided.

- ALWAYS wash your hands before handling food and after using the toilet and after touching or feeding any of the animals at the Centre
- DO NOT handle food if you have any skin, nose, throat or bowel problems.
- ENSURE cuts and sores are covered with water proof dressings
- KEEP yourself clean and wear clean clothing
- DO NOT SMOKE in a food room. Never cough or sneeze over food.
- CLEAN as you go. Keep all equipment and surfaces clean.
- PREPARE raw and cooked food in separate areas. Keep food covered and either refrigerated or piping hot.
- KEEP your hands off food as far as possible
- ENSURE waste food is disposed of properly. Empty the dustbin regularly and wash your hands after putting waste in it.

Gas appliances are serviced annually and Noah's Ark Children's Venture holds a Landlord's Gas Safety Certificate. Electrical appliances are serviced annually by the appropriate authority and any defects/breakages in equipment should be reported to the Centre Managers as they happen.

All electrical equipment in the Centre is P.A.T. tested annually. We cannot be responsible for the electrical worthiness of any equipment brought to the Centre for personal use.

Damages

Please notify the Centre Managers of any damage to the buildings or equipment that happens during your stay at the Centre. If we feel that the damage was deliberately incurred then we may bill you for the cost of replacement or repair.

ACTIVITIES

Noah's Ark Children's Venture has a policy of risk assessment that includes the regular maintenance of all equipment. Please remember that the play equipment is in constant use when groups are staying at the Centre and that this is often 7 days per week from Easter to September. This is particularly important in regard to the BMX bikes. They are checked and given a thorough service on a weekly basis but are in constant heavy use and if a bike is faulty please do not use it or allow any members of your group to do so. If you notice any damage to property or equipment please report it to the Centre Managers immediately.

Adventure playground area

It is the group leaders' responsibility to ensure that there is adequate adult supervision of children and young people when they are playing on the rope swings, the play structures and any other equipment e.g. the trampoline.

Do not allow overcrowding or excessive horseplay on the swings and structures.

Make sure that children are aware of the dangers of passing too close to the swings when they are being used.

Trampoline

The trampoline needs to be supervised at all times by a member of your staff. It is advised that supervision of the trampoline is by a person qualified to Instructor Level 1. Use of the trampoline comes under the public liability insurance of your organisation. Please ensure that only one person at a time uses the trampoline and that those using it do not attempt somersaults or any other dangerous manoeuvres. It must not be used during the hours of darkness or under the influence of alcohol or other substances. Shoes must not be worn.

BMX bikes and track

Helmets are provided by the Centre and should be used by everyone. It is the group leaders' responsibility to ensure that they are worn.

When riding the bikes, young people must be properly supervised and must not go anywhere other than the hard surface path within the wood. This is a figure of eight shape and no one should go into the woodland on bikes or on to other people's property.

Young people must not leave Macaroni Wood on bike rides unless they are supervised by at least two responsible adults – one at the front and one at the rear of the party. If group leaders choose to take young people on supervised bike rides away from the Centre they should:-

- a) ensure they have adequate insurance cover in place
- b) inform the centre managers of their intentions
- c) always carry a mobile phone and the Centre number – **01367 850356** – with them in case of an emergency.

BMX bikes are available for the children and young people and the mountain bikes are for adult use only. The mountain bikes **must not** be taken on the BMX track. The tricycles are primarily for the use of Castree House visitors but can be used by Bazley House users who are unable to ride a two wheel cycle.

Commonsense must be applied in using the bikes near the swings and on the BMX track. Be aware that the BMX track can be slippery after prolonged periods of rain and in fact may be roped off if the Centre Managers feel it is appropriate to do so.

All bikes must be stored away at dusk every day and the bike shed closed and locked.

It is the group leaders' responsibility to ensure that all members of their group are aware of the no-go areas in the wood as defined in this booklet and by the Centre Manager in his introductory talk.

The Animals

We have lots of small animals at the Centre including piglets, lambs, goat kids, rabbits, guinea pigs, chickens, guinea fowl, turkeys and doves. They are fed everyday and you are welcome to help but please make sure that your group members are aware of the following points:

- Ask permission from the Centre Managers before you go into any of the runs
- Don't chase any animal
- Only collect eggs if you have permission and make sure you close all gates in the runs
- Don't pick up or hold any of the small animals unless an adult is present

And most importantly:

WASH YOUR HANDS AFTER TOUCHING OR FEEDING ANY OF THE ANIMALS



THE MINIBUS

You are allowed to drive our minibus under our Department of Transport and the Regions section 19 permit.

The minibus carries full comprehensive insurance. In the event of a claim the user will bear responsibility for the excess on the policy which is currently £150 - unless you are told otherwise.

It has regular ten week vehicle inspections undertaken by a Ministry of Transport approved garage.

It is MOT'd each year to Ministry of Transport Section 5 level.

All drivers who want to use our minibus will have to fulfil the following requirements.

Have passed

a MIDAS test (can be organised through Lewisham Community Transport Association)

or

a local authority driving test

or

can demonstrate experience of driving large vehicles through their work i.e. a HGV or PSV license holder

All drivers must bring with them their clean driving licenses in order that a photocopy can be taken for our records.

All organisations who want to use the minibus must be a member organisation of Noah's Ark Children's Venture. To become a member of NACV you will need to complete a short form stating that you support the aims and objectives of our organisation. The application will be considered by the Board of Directors and agreed or rejected.

Organisations/individuals will be informed of the Directors' decision in writing. The Board of Directors reserves the right to withhold its reasons for reaching any particular decision. There is no charge for becoming a member.

Using the minibus

All group leaders and drivers of the vehicle **must** read the drivers manual that is kept in the minibus and contains all the information relevant for using the vehicle and driving safely.