

## **GLENLIVET ESTATE SCHOOL VISITS - INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS/LEADERS HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES**

Visits to the countryside provide great opportunities to learn, but supervisors need to be aware that there are a number of potential hazards that pupils may be exposed to.

Children are naturally curious and keen for adventure. However, lack of adequate supervision can sometimes have serious consequences.

### **INSURANCE COVER**

The Crown Estate has its own third party insurance cover to cover for visitors to the Glenlivet Estate. Teachers/leaders however, need to be aware that they are responsible for the supervision of their group at all times, and need to check their local education authority/governing body insurance cover and the regulations covering outdoor visits.

### **GUIDELINES**

During a visit to the Glenlivet Estate, pupils may be exposed to hazards presented by the following:-

- Exposure to working forestry machinery.
- Rough/slippery ground conditions.
- Contact with poisonous/rash inducing plants/fungi.
- Contact with insects which are vectors of disease.
- Contact with stinging/biting insects
- Snake bite (adder).
- Contact with soil/water borne organisms that may cause disease.
- The effects of certain weather conditions including sunburn, extreme heat, extreme cold and exposure.

***The risks associated with these hazards are generally very small and should not detract from the enjoyment of a visit. A few simple precautions will help reduce these risks to an acceptable level.***

Teachers are therefore asked to take note of the following guidelines:-

#### **1. Forestry machinery**

School groups are sometimes taken to see working forestry machinery during a visit. To reduce the risks associated with falling trees and machinery parts, supervisors should ensure that:

- Pupils are aware of the serious risk of injury presented by machinery.
- Group members must wear safety helmets at all times when near working machinery.
- Staff leading groups should only approach the rear of the machine in the rack and must not allow group members to go in front of them.
- Staff members must not approach within 30m of the machine until the operator has signalled that he has seen the group and parked the head and switched off the machine.
- Staff must not allow the group members to touch machinery parts when describing the components of the harvesting head.
- Staff must ensure that when the machine is operating that no pupils encroach within a minimum distance of 30m.

#### **2. Rough / slippery ground conditions**

Children can occasionally be injured by tripping/slipping on rough ground or they can receive skin/facial injuries from branches/prickly vegetation. Supervisors are therefore asked to ensure that:

- Pupils are aware of the potential risk of injury.
- Stout footwear is advised, with non-slip soles.
- Pupils should be made aware of the risks of mis-behaviour /tom-foolery when encountering muddy/difficult ground conditions / walking in woodlands.
- Pupils should not be allowed to run across uneven ground or through trees.

#### **3. Contact with poisonous or rash/disease inducing plants/fungi or other items**

During a visit, children may pick up and handle plants and fungi or other items that they find. Weils disease (Leptospirosis) is transmitted by rat's urine. While the vast majority of the items children are likely to handle on a visit will cause them no harm, supervisors should ensure that to avoid potential infection, particularly gastric upset:

- Children are aware of the risk of handling plants/fungi and other items they may collect.
- All cuts and abrasions must be covered with a waterproof dressing before the visit.
- Pupils do not put their hands in their mouths or rub their eyes after they have handled any plants, fungi, animals or other items.
- Pupils do not eat any plants/fungi or put them in their mouths.

- **It is VITAL that all children wash their hands THOROUGHLY following a visit and/or before they eat any food/lunches.** (Children can safely wash their hands in fast moving burns/streams in the areas where groups are taken on the Estate, before having their picnic).
- Pupils do not throw plants/fungi or other items at each other in fun.
- Children do not handle dead animals.

#### **4. Contact with insects which are vectors of disease.**

While the risks associated with insect borne diseases in this country are relatively low, there is one particular disease, Lyme's disease, that children may be exposed to during a visit. This disease is transmitted via sheep and wild animal ticks and to minimise the risks supervisors should ensure that:

- Pupils are aware of the risks associated with tick bites
- Exposed skin is kept to a minimum
- Clothing is checked for ticks following a visit
- Any ticks found are removed immediately
- If children suffer a tick bite and/or experience joint pains/flu' symptoms, they should consult a doctor who should be informed that they have been on a countryside visit.

#### **5. Contact with stinging/biting insects**

Depending on the time of year of the visit, children may be exposed to wasps, bees or other stinging or biting insects during a visit. While a sting or bite from these insects will generally only cause discomfort for most people, some individuals can suffer extreme allergic reactions following an insect bite/sting. Supervisors should therefore ensure that:

- Children do not disturb or aggravate insect nests
- Any children who suffer an insect bite/sting during a visit are treated according to first aid guidelines and are monitored carefully.
- Ranger staff should be notified if any children present in the group are known to suffer severe adverse allergic reactions.

#### **6. Snake bite (adder).**

The only snake found in Scotland is the adder. This snake is a protected species and has a poisonous bite. While a bite from an adder is rarely fatal, children and some people may suffer a severe adverse reaction following a bite. Adders are found on the Glenlivet Estate but they are shy creatures and are rarely seen. They will usually disappear very quickly into cover if they are disturbed and only generally strike when frightened. Supervisors should therefore ensure that:

- Children are made aware about the risks from adder bites
- Pupils should be told not to handle adders if they find or come across one.
- Local doctors maintain supplies of anti-venom and any person suffering an adder bite should be treated according to first aid guidelines and removed to the local health centre/hospital immediately.

#### **7. Contact with soil/water borne organisms that may cause disease**

There are several diseases or gastric upsets that may be caught from water or soil dwelling organisms including Weils disease (see above, section 3). Dead and decaying animals may sometimes also be present in water courses. Supervisors should therefore ensure that the guidelines as outlined in section 3 above are followed and in addition:

- Children are made aware of the risks of soil and waterborne infections/disease
- Children do not drink water from burns, streams or ponds.

#### **8. The effects of certain weather conditions including sunburn, extreme heat, extreme cold and exposure.**

Children can be taken to a variety of locations on the Estate during a visit and depending on weather conditions and time of year, may be subject to exposure to extreme heat or extreme cold, or be vulnerable to sunburn. Supervisors should therefore ensure that:

- Children are made aware of the risks of skin exposure to the sun
- Skin exposure is kept to the minimum where the risk of sunburn is high
- Children are properly equipped for the activities they will be undertaking and have adequate clothing for the prevailing weather conditions.

***Please note that Ranger Staff are first aid trained and carry first aid kits with them during school visits.***

If you would like any further information or wish to discuss any of the items mentioned here, please contact:

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