

Maes y Lade Outdoors

**OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES
AND RISK ASSESSMENTS**

Introduction

This document has been written to provide centre staff, visiting staff and students at Maes y Lade Outdoors (MyL), with the regulations and guidelines that are specific to MyL and to ensure that we have a framework for safe working procedures at the centre.

This Code of Practice has been written in conjunction with the operational guidelines and procedures from the AALS, WCA, MLTUK and the BCA. Copies of these documents are kept in the office. MyL staff will be provided with a copy of this Code of Practice and will be required to ensure that they work within its guidelines.

Alan Jones
Centre Manager

January 2012

Section 1 The Aims & Values of Maes y Lade

The Purpose of Maes y Lade

To provide a caring environment, which delivers high quality outdoor and residential experiences to the youth and the wider community of Essex.

The Aims of Maes y Lade

- ❑ To provide an Outdoor Education Curriculum that is broad, relevant, balanced, challenging and flexible in meeting the needs of the young people of Essex.
- ❑ To develop self-confidence, self-esteem, self-reliance and a sense of achievement through the meeting of challenge (physical, mental, emotional) whilst operating in a controlled safety framework.
- ❑ To establish a caring, secure and well-disciplined learning environment, which seeks to broaden the experiences of all.
- ❑ To provide a residential experience which offers a friendly open atmosphere where everyone at the centre is respected and encouraged to contribute to the quality of the experience.
- ❑ To promote concern for, knowledge and appreciation of, the natural environment.
- ❑ To provide opportunities for life long learning.
- ❑ To develop interpersonal skills and promote the need be aware of others and work as part of a team.

Maes y Lade and the Curriculum

Maes y Lade seeks to provide an environment through which course participants can learn, develop and understand more about themselves. We are committed to helping accompanying staff, be they teachers, youth workers or social workers deliver the National Curriculum and the Youth Service curriculum and help meet targets for educational attainment and achievement.

This Curriculum Statement identifies the core values and principles upon which the Centre's programmes are designed and delivered.

At Maes y Lade programmed learning experiences are:

Planned...

- To take into account the age, needs and abilities of all pupils attending courses at the centre. Teaching is planned and delivered in the knowledge that people learn at different rates.
- To ensure continuity and progression throughout each course allowing personal development to take place. This is achieved through staff consultation.
- To provide courses that take into account the whole residential experience, incorporating social, domestic and activity elements in the programme.
- To ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all allowing pupils to maximise their achievements irrespective of gender, race, religion, culture, special needs or socio-economic factors.

Delivered...

- Through a variety of learning experiences designed to educate, stimulate and challenge. At Maes y Lade we seek to make full and appropriate use of the natural environment in which we are based.
- By trained qualified staff who strive to maximise the learning potential of each individual.
- With the emphasis on personal and social skills designed to promote and develop self esteem, self awareness, a positive self image, pride, motivation, respect for others and the ability to successfully live together in a small community for a concentrated period of time.
- In partnership with visiting staff in order to provide an experience of the highest standard for every individual.
- With an emphasis on adventure and challenge within a closely monitored and tightly structured safety framework.

Monitored...

- Through daily staff consultation when student progress is discussed.
- Through visual observation and verbal communication with students.
- Through evaluation sheets designed to monitor performance against meeting service aims.
- Through accredited and recorded outcomes.

Section 2 Organisation Structure

The following structure exists in order to define responsibility and accountability in the partnership between Centre Manager, Centre Staff and Visiting Staff and course participants.

These responsibilities can be broadly defined as follows:

Centre Manager

- ❑ Ensure that suitably competent Instructors staff the programme.
- ❑ Ensure all equipment used meets with current safety requirements and regulations.
- ❑ Ensure that all safety procedures are monitored.
- ❑ Ensure that regular safety checks are recorded.

Senior Instructor Level I

- ❑ Be a positive role model for young people visiting the Centre.
- ❑ Lead clients in outdoor activities both on and off site.
- ❑ Be responsible for the effective implementation of the daily programme of activities in line with the centre and County Council's policies and guidelines.
- ❑ Manage and maintain activity resources in accordance with health and safety guidelines for personal and protective equipment.
- ❑ Negotiate with young people on their involvement in any decision-making process concerning the programme planning, implementation and evaluation.
- ❑ Participate in the facilitation of professional development needs of other staff and be proactive in the development of ones own personal development.
- ❑ Evaluate and review the outdoor education-taking place.
- ❑ To assist in the implementation of an effective programme of maintenance for the centre.

Visiting Staff/Leaders

Prior to arrival

- ❑ Coordinate administration relating to the course ensuring that invoices are paid on time and relevant paper work (e.g. consent forms) are returned to the centre.
- ❑ Establish and define the course aims through consultation with the centre staff.
- ❑ Liase with the centre over the pastoral welfare of all students attending the course, particularly notifying the centre of special requirements.

During your stay

- ❑ Act in “Loco Parentis” during the stay at the centre.
- ❑ Be responsible for the behaviour and conduct of the students throughout their stay.
- ❑ Ensure participants do not smoke anywhere but in the designated smoking area.
- ❑ Ensure participants do not consume alcohol or drugs during their stay.
- ❑ Supervise activities that are not delivered by MyL staff.

Section 49 of the DFE Safety in Outdoor Centres Guidance, November 1994 states:

“ Under common law, the teachers, group leaders and staff accompanying the party on the visit have ultimate responsibility, acting ‘in loco parentis.’ However occasionally, the teacher or leader can discharge his/her responsibility, temporarily entrusting the safety of the pupils undertaking specific activities to a member of the centre staff. This may well be the case when pupils participate in potentially hazardous activities controlled by experts at the centre. Throughout the rest of the visit, the responsibility will be with the accompanying teacher/leader.”

It is the policy of MyL to insist that even when students are over the age of 18, visiting group leaders will still be held responsible for the behaviour and actions of their students.

Good discipline is an essential factor that all students must display, plus an ability to carry out instructions given to them by visiting staff or centre instructors. Visiting staff are expected to take responsibility for maintaining discipline at all times. Centre staff will assist in discouraging inappropriate behaviour from students whilst on activities but will not take the lead in this situation. If centre staff feel that control has been lost and the group is at risk the centre staff leading the activity will stop the session and report to the Centre Manager or in his absence the Senior Instructor Level II.

Course Members

- ❑ Take responsibility for their own safety by listening to the instructions given by centre and accompanying staff.
- ❑ Participate in all the activities offered at the centre
- ❑ Adopt a positive attitude towards the aims of the course.

Section 3 Staffing

All activities will be staffed by permanent Maes y Lade staff or by freelance staff that have undergone an induction programme at the centre. All staff are subject to vigorous Essex County Council recruitment procedures.

Competent Persons

It is essential that all staff are competent to lead and instruct the activities they are programmed to deliver. In order to demonstrate this they shall satisfy one or more of the following:

- ❑ Have recent and relevant experience of that activity.
- ❑ Hold the relevant NGB Qualification or be demonstrably moving towards attaining this award.
- ❑ Have the written assurance from the Technical Adviser on the capability of that person to lead the activity.

Professional Development

The Centre Manager has the responsibility of ensuring that all staff are competent to lead the activities that the centre is licensed to provide. This is monitored through:

- ❑ Identifying an instructor's level of competence by viewing their qualification certificate and logbook of experience.
- ❑ Regular in-house staff training.
- ❑ Observations of Practice.
- ❑ Identifying training needs and development through the My Performance process.

Overview of the Centre Staffing

Instructional Staff	1 Centre Manager 1 Senior Instructor Level I
Support Staff	1 Business Support Assistant 1 Housekeeper 1 Cooks/Cleaners 1 Handyman

The Instructional staff team represents a balance of age and experience. The Centre Manager has worked at the centre for over 20 years. Two of the instructors have worked at the centre in a seasonal capacity for three years. The Senior Instructor Level II has been in post for less than one year.

The centre is able to call upon a number of fully qualified, local freelance instructors in order to provide additional staff cover on programmes to allow for staff illness, absences, time off etc.

The Business Support Assistant carries specific responsibilities concerning bookings and financial administration and general secretarial duties.

The Housekeeper is in charge of the kitchen, food ordering and menus and the cleanliness of the centre. The two cooks/cleaners support the housekeeper in all domestic duties.

The Handyman is a part time position that carries specific responsibilities concerning maintenance checks and general maintenance about the centre.

Qualifications of Instructional Staff

Manager - Alan Jones

Youth Worker Certificate
Mountain Leader Award (Summer)
BCU Level 3 Canoe Coach
BCU level 2 Kayak Coach
BCU Canoe Safety Test
Swift Water Rescue Technician Unit 1
BCA Local Cave Leader Award Level 1
Single Pitch Award
MIAS Level 2 Mountain Bike Instructor Award
Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme Accredited Expedition Assessor

Senior Instructor Level 1 - John Bowler

NVQ Level 3 Outdoor Education
Mountain Leader Award (Summer)
Single Pitch Award
BCA Local Cave Leaders Award Level 1
BCU Level 3 Canoe Coach
BCU Level 2 Kayak Coach
Canoe Safety Test
Canoe Safety Test Assessor
SMBLA Trail Cycle Leader Award
PCV D1 Driving Licence
Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme Accredited Expedition Assessor

In addition to the above, all staff hold a current and relevant First Aid certificate and undertake re-training when necessary.

Section 4 General Course Management

Programme Design

Programmes are designed through consultation with the accompanying staff, taking into account specific requests and requirements including group size, age, abilities and the time of year. This takes place prior to a group arriving at MyL.

Welcome Meeting

This is conducted by a member of MyL staff and includes an outline of the domestic arrangements, house rules, fire procedure and room allocation.

Participants will also be issued with any relevant kit for their course.

Arrival Meeting

This meeting involves MyL and visiting staff and confirms the number of participants, aims and objectives of the course, the programme, staffing, and medical information.

Staff Meetings

These are held each day between MyL and visiting staff to discuss the following:

- ❑ The day's programme/previous evenings programme and 'distance travelled' by the course participants.
- ❑ Discipline.
- ❑ Physical and psychological welfare of the group.
- ❑ The plan for future days including weather conditions, staffing, venues etc

During Activity

Centre procedures and guidelines are followed involving regular assessments of prevailing conditions, general welfare of the group and nature of the activity. Plans are made and modified accordingly.

Recording

Records of all significant incidents are kept in compliance with current legislation and centre procedures.

Quality Assurance

Maes y Lade implements a quality assurance framework designed to monitor the quality of the programmes run at the centre. These are regularly evaluated by the Centre Manager and acted upon where necessary.

Section 5 Risk Management

General Statement

Maes y Lade has an excellent safety record and is committed to maintaining high standards throughout all aspects of its operations.

The aim of risk management at Maes y Lade is to ensure that all activities fall into a 'Low Risk' category and that the centre complies with current legislation. Whilst adventurous activities will never be risk free, it is hoped that by regularly reviewing safety procedures and adhering to recommendations our excellent safety record will continue.

The Risk Assessment Process

At Maes y Lade a risk assessment for activities is generally based on the following:

- ❑ Centre (or other) staff leading the activities are physically able, suitably qualified or experienced within the context of the activity specific guidance. They are deemed competent in assuming the responsibility for making the risk assessment at the site and time of the activity. (Ref: P8 competent persons).
- ❑ Accompanying staff are physically able, but not necessarily expert (or competent) in the activity.
- ❑ The weather forecast and its implications on the activity planned have been given due consideration and the venue selected is deemed suitable.
- ❑ The age, ability and fitness of the group has been assessed and measured against the requirements of the activity.
- ❑ The Instructor in charge must always be ready to modify or abandon the activity should circumstances dictate. Wherever possible re-arrangements should be notified to the centre.
- ❑ The group leader is deemed competent to maintain group control and organisation.
- ❑ Where applicable all equipment will conform to CEN and other appropriate standards.

Maintenance of Activity Equipment

For all activities, MyL uses equipment that is approved by the manufacturer and National Governing Bodies for that activity. New/unused equipment is kept in a separate store. The Instructor checks activity equipment issued to their group at the start of the activity and again when it is returned.

Faulty equipment is repaired at the time, disposed of, or removed to the separate store for repair at a later date. If the defective item is removed from stock then a replacement may be taken out of the new store at that time.

There are major overhauls of activity equipment each year. This includes conducting Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Checks for relevant items.

An inventory of activity equipment is kept on file in the office and this includes details of new purchases and disused gear that has been written off.

Leader Incapacitation

There is a risk that the member of MyL staff leading the activity becomes incapacitated. Whenever possible two adults should accompany each group and the following should be established:

- ❑ All centre staff must carry a mobile phone and contact should be made with the centre or member of staff on call.
- ❑ The location of vehicle keys and whether the accompanying member of staff can drive the minibus.
- ❑ The location of emergency equipment and how to use it.
- ❑ Details of the proposed route, proximity of other groups or other sources of help and possible escape routes.

Canoeing & Kayaking

The centre's guidelines are written with reference to those of the British Canoe Union (BCU) / Welsh Canoe Association (WCA).

Venues & Staff Qualifications

The following rivers and canals are regularly used for paddles sports:

River Wye

- Glasbury to Hay on Wye (Class I)
- Hay on Wye to Whitney (Class I)

River Usk

- Sennybridge to Brecon (Class II – III)
- Brecon to Talybont (Class II – II+)
- Talybont to Crickhowell (Class III - IV)

Brecon & Monmouth Canal

Llangors Lake

Activity	Venue & Grade	Qualification
Canoe	Glasbury to Hay (Low level)	Level II Canoe Coach <u>or</u> L2_Kayak Coach + 4* Canoe
	Glasbury to Hay (High level)	Level III Canoe Coach
	Rivers Wye & Usk (Grade II sections)	Level III Canoe Coach
	Grade III sections	Level III Canoe Coach + 5* Canoe
	Brecon & Monmouth Canal	Level II Canoe Coach <u>or</u> Kayak Coach + 3* Canoe
	Open Water Venues	Level III Canoe Coach

Kayak	Glasbury to Hay (Low level)	Level II Kayak Coach <u>or</u> L2 Canoe Coach + 4* Kayak
	Glasbury to Hay (High level)	Level III Kayak Coach
	Rivers Wye & Usk (Grade II sections)	Level III Kayak Coach
	Grade III water	Level III Kayak Coach + 5* Kayak
	Brecon & Monmouth Canal	Level II Kayak Coach <u>or</u> L2 Canoe Coach + 3* Kayak

If doubts exist as to the grade or level of the water or the effect of prevailing weather conditions, the approval of the Centre Manager or the relevant Technical Adviser must be sought before any paddle sport activity can take place.

General Venue Considerations

When selecting a venue, the instructor must consider:

- The prevailing weather conditions.
- The effect of those weather conditions on the venue.
- The age, ability and needs of the participants.

Access agreements must be adhered to.

Venue Specific Consideration

Due to the nature of the changes in a section of the River Wye between Glasbury and The Holly Bush Pub, specific permission from the Centre Manager must be sought to use this section. The section between The Holly Bush Pub and Hay-on-Wye is unaffected.

Group Size

1: 10 on Placid & Grade I Water.

1: 6 on Class II & III Water.

The member of MyL staff should hold the appropriate qualification as outlined above.

An accompanying member of group staff or an Assistant Instructor should also accompany the group. This person need not be experienced or qualified.

Equipment Considerations

- All students undertaking paddle sport activities must wear buoyancy aids. Instructors must give instruction in their use and check the fitting before going afloat.
- Where water conditions or the activities dictate, correctly fitted helmets must be worn.
- When spray decks are used the instructor must ensure that the students are familiar with the method of release.
- Footwear must protect against cuts and grazes, not hinder the student in the event of a capsize or swim and must remain securely on the feet.
- Clothing must be appropriate to the prevailing weather and water conditions. If emersion is likely and prevailing conditions dictate, wetsuits must be worn.
- Kayaks and canoes must have sufficient buoyancy.
- Emergency equipment comprising a first aid kit, group shelter, knife, throwline and a method of towing (if appropriate to the venue) must be carried on all journeys. Additional safety items might be carried as dictated by the weather and water conditions.

Group Management

- All students must be aware of the procedures to be followed in the event of a capsize.
- On Grade II water and above all paddlers must be instructed in the use of a communication system.

The rafting of open canoes should be considered when the ability of the group and/or the prevailing weather and river conditions dictate that this would be a useful technique. This technique should only be employed if pinning can be avoided.

Swimming Ability

The instructor must ascertain the swimming ability of the students before the group leaves the centre. Whilst it is desirable for students to be able to swim, the instructor may exercise his or her judgement in allowing non-swimmers to participate providing favourable weather and water conditions prevail. If a doubt exists the Centre Manager or the relevant Technical Advisor must be consulted.

Maes y Lade Outdoors Paddle sport Risk Assessment

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Level of Risk (H, M, L)	Control Measures
Equipment Failure	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment is used according to the manufacturers instructions and guidance on intended use. The instructor must check all PPE before the session begins. In addition, formal PPE inspections occur bi-annually. Students are briefed on the correct use of equipment in a manner appropriate to their age and intellect.
Slips, trips & bumps	Students & Staff	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants must wear helmets and appropriate footwear throughout the activity. The instructor must indicate slip hazards where they exist and provide clear briefings for participants in how to manage the hazard. Games should be selected which are appropriate to the ability of the group.
Injury as a result of collision	Students & Staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants coached in strokes particularly backwards paddling and stopping!
Flooding	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor must gain an up to date weather forecast for the area and know how it will affect the river. The instructor must have a sound working knowledge of the route, including the location of safe and appropriate access points allowing escape from the river
Drowning	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The instructor must ensure the participants wear a buoyancy aid on or around the water. The instructor must know of any non-swimmers and non-confident swimmers before leaving the centre. The instructor must choose a venue that is appropriate to the ability and aspirations of the participants.
Hypothermia	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants should be clothed to minimise heat loss, including the wearing of wetsuits if the participants are likely to be immersed for long periods of time. Instructor must gain an up to date weather forecast for the area and know how it will affect the cave environment. Should conditions dictate participants must have access to warm and waterproof clothing and the instructor should carry a group shelter and a warm drink.

Manual Handling	Students & Staff	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Instructors must provide a clear brief and demo on how to load, unload and move boats.• If young people are involved in moving boats, sufficient adult help must be available to avoid injury to all.
Entrapment	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participants given instruction on how to manoeuvre the craft.• The instructor must brief the participants on the hazard and how to avoid it.• Water conditions must be monitored and plans changed if required.

Caving

The centre's guidelines are written with reference to those of the British Caving Association (BCA).

Venues & Staff Qualifications

The following venues are regularly used for caving activities:

Porth yr Ogof

OS Landranger 1:50,000 Sheet 160

GR: SO 928 124

Eglyws Faen

OS Landranger 1:50,000 Sheet 161

GR: SO 192 156

Ogof Clogwyn

OS Landranger 1:50,000 Sheet 161

GR: SO 212 128

Bridge Cave

OS Landranger 1:50,000 Sheet 160

GR: SN 911 140

White Lady

OS Landranger 1:50,000 Sheet 160

GR: SN 911 136

Ogof y Ci

OS Landranger 1:50,000 Sheet 160

GR: SO 040 104

Pen Eryr

OS Landranger 1:50,000 Sheet 161

GR: SO 207 152

The minimum qualification required for leading journeys in these caves is the Local Cave and Mine Leader Award (LCMLA) Level 1. This award requires that the caves used be specifically named in the holder's logbook. Instructors will only lead in named caves.

General Venue Considerations

When selecting a venue, the instructor must consider:

- The prevailing weather conditions.
- The effect of those weather conditions on the cave environment, especially water levels and the ease of access.
- The age, ability and aspirations of the participants.

Access agreements must be adhered to.

Specific Venue Considerations

Abseiling into **Porth yr Ogof** can be conducted by a:

- Caving Instructor Certificate (CIC).
- LCMLA Level II.
- LCMLA Level I who also holds a MLTUK Single Pitch Award (SPA).

If this activity is planned, the instructor should ensure that a releasable abseil is used incorporating an abseil rope and separate safety rope. All students should have their own harness. A responsible adult (this can be the accompanying member of staff) must be available to supervise the students as they arrive in the cave.

Clogwyn: Requires an 80m Handline to access the cave entrance.

White Lady: Requires a throwline to be carried by the instructor.

Bridge Cave: The boulder choke is unstable and the cave is not appropriate for novice groups.

Group Size

1 : 10

The member of MyL staff must hold the appropriate qualification as outlined above.

An accompanying member of group staff or an Assistant Instructor should also accompany the group. This person need not be experienced or qualified.

The ratio must be reduced if the venue:

- Has an access restriction.
- Requires a high degree of competence.
- Is vulnerable to damage by visitors.

Equipment Considerations

The instructor must ensure that all participants wear:

- Adequate warm clothing and protective over garments.
- Wellington Boots with a good tread.
- Helmet.
- Efficient and sufficient lighting.
- A wetsuit if the activity involves prolonged exposure to cold water.

Appropriate emergency equipment must be available in the cave. This equipment must include:

- A First Aid Kit.
- Group shelter.
- Spare lighting.

The following items of equipment should be taken to the venue but may not need to be available in the cave:

- Rope.
- Old Sleeping Bag.

Activities involving Water

When caving activities involve being in or around water, instructors will adhere to the guidelines below:

- Instructors must only use venues where they are familiar with the depth and flow of the water.
- Participants must not be allowed to enter fast flowing water of any depth that is likely to make standing up difficult or where an approved safety system, including one to one spotting, reaching aids as well as throw and hand lines cannot be used to render support to a participant if required.

Maes y Lade Outdoors Caving Risk Assessment

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Level of Risk (H, M, L)	Control Measures
Equipment Failure	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment is used according to the manufacturers instructions and guidance on intended use. The instructor must check PPE before every session. PPE is also formally inspected bi-annually. Students are briefed on the correct use of equipment in a manner appropriate to their age and intellect.
Slips, trips & bumps	Students & Staff	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants must wear helmets and appropriate footwear throughout the activity. The instructor must indicate slip hazards where they exist and provide clear briefings for participants in how to manage the hazard. The instructor must choose a suitable route once underground which is appropriate to the ability of the participants.
Falls	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The instructor must choose a suitable route once underground which is appropriate to the ability of the participants. The instructor must employ a suitable safety system appropriate to the situation e.g. spotting, abseiling, to safeguard exposed sections.
Flooding	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Instructor must gain an up to date weather forecast for the area and know how it will affect the cave environment. The instructor must have a sound working knowledge of the cave, including the location of safe and appropriate access points allowing escape from the cave if required. The instructor must monitor water levels within the cave and allow a margin of safety sufficient to permit escape from the cave.
Drowning	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The instructor must ensure the participants don't enter water they will have problems standing in unless protected by an appropriate safety system.
Hypothermia	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants must be clothed to minimise heat loss, including the wearing of wetsuits if the participants are likely to be immersed in water for long periods of time. The Instructor must gain an up to date weather forecast for the area and know how it will affect the cave environment. Should conditions dictate participants must have access to additional warm clothing and the instructor should carry a group shelter and a warm drink.

Rock fall	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructors must avoid areas that are susceptible to rock fall. • Participants must wear correctly fitted helmets throughout the activity.
Poor Visibility	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lighting system used must be appropriate to the venue. • Lights must be checked before entering the cave. • The instructor must carry spare lighting and have a contingency plan for exiting the cave in the event of a lighting failure.
Exposure to Radon	Students & Staff	Low	MyL in conjunction with the regional AHOEC are monitoring radon levels in the caves used by groups. The findings are published periodically. Records are kept in the office and are brought to the attention of the teaching staff through staff meetings or through copies of the report being handed to them.
Lost Participant	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instructor must set up a form of communication to identify the front and back of the group. • All participants should be briefed of the procedure in the event of becoming separated from the main group.

Gorge Walking

No NGB qualification exists for gorge walking therefore the centre operates in accordance with best practice.

Venues & Staff Qualifications

The following venues are regularly used for gorge walking activities:

Sychryd Gorge & Mellte River

OS Landranger 1:50,000 Sheet 160
GR 912 080

Blaen y Glyn

OS Landranger 1:50,000 Sheet 160
GR 063 171

The minimum qualification required for leading journeys in these gorges is the Local Cave and Mine Leader Award (LCMLA) Level 1 or the MLTUK Summer Mountain Leader. When abseiling is planned, the instructor must also hold the MLTUK Single Pitch Award (SPA).

If the activity involves risk assessed and approved deep water or fast flowing water sections instructors must have received training in moving water rescue techniques. Appropriate courses are:

- Swift Water Rescue Technician Unit 1.
- BCU White Water Safety and Rescue.

General Venue Considerations

When selecting a venue, the instructor must consider:

- The prevailing weather conditions.
- The effect of those weather conditions on the gorge environment.
- The age, ability and needs of the participants.

The instructor must be aware of the local conditions likely to be encountered in the gorge, especially water levels and the difficulties surrounding access and rescue as a result of those levels.

Consideration should also be given to underfoot conditions as well as the fragility of the environment. Sensitive areas must be avoided and access agreements must be adhered to.

Group Size

1: 10

The member of MyL staff should hold the appropriate qualification as outlined above.

An accompanying member of group staff or an Assistant Instructor should also accompany the group. This person need not be experienced or qualified.

This number must be reduced if the venue:

- Requires a high degree of competence.
- Is vulnerable to damage by visitors.
- Or the participants require extra attention.

Equipment

The instructor must ensure that all participants wear:

- Clothing appropriate to the conditions, commonly a wet suit and waterproofs if the participants are to be exposed to cold water throughout the journey.
- Appropriate footwear including trainers, Wellington Boots or walking boots depending on the venue and type of activity being undertaken.
- A helmet. This can be a paddling or mountaineering helmet and should be determined by the nature of the session. A watersports helmet is more appropriate if the participants are undertaking a 'wet gorge'.

Appropriate emergency equipment must be available in the gorge. This equipment must include:

- A First Aid kit.
- Group Shelter.
- Spare clothes.
- Throwline.
- Knife.

Activities involving Water

Gorge walking inherently involves being in or around water. As a result, instructors will adhere to the guidelines below:

- Instructors should only use venues where they are familiar with the depth and flow of the water.
- Approved safety systems including one to one spotting, reaching aids as well as throwlines must be used if the situation dictates.

Maes y Lade Outdoors Gorge Walking Risk Assessment

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Level of Risk (H, M, L)	Control Measures
Equipment Failure	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment is used according to the manufacturers instructions and guidance on intended use. The instructor must check all PPE before every session. In addition, PPE is formally inspected bi-annually. Students are briefed on the correct use of equipment in a manner appropriate to their age and intellect. The instructor must make regular checks to ensure that equipment is correctly fitted throughout the whole day.
Slips, trips & bumps	Students & Staff	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants must wear appropriate footwear throughout the activity. The instructor must indicate slip hazards where they exist and provide clear briefings for participants in how to manage the hazard. The instructor must choose a suitable route in the gorge that takes into account the ability and co-ordination of the participants.
Falls	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The instructor must ensure that an effective safety system is employed to protect scrambling sections e.g. spotting. Participants should be given clear briefings as to how to overcome the scrambling sections of the gorge.
Drowning	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students must wear an appropriate buoyancy aid. The instructor must be aware of any non-swimmers and non-confident swimmers within the group before departing the centre. The instructor must choose a route in the gorge that takes in account the abilities of all the participants.
Entrapment	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor must have a sound working knowledge of the gorge and where likely hazards may occur. The instructor must have a contingency plan to avoid areas where this hazard exists.
Jumping into water	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The instructor must conduct a recce to check the depth of water and any obstructions. Participants must only be allowed to jump when their ability and co-ordination allow them to do so safely.
Hypothermia	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants should be clothed appropriate to the conditions. This will include wearing wetsuits and waterproofs if immersion is likely for most of the activity.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should conditions dictate participants must have access to extra warm clothing and the instructor should carry a group shelter, emergency clothing and a warm drink.
Rock fall	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructors must avoid areas that are susceptible to rock fall. Participants must wear correctly fitted helmets throughout the activity. Students should be briefed on the hazard and how it will be managed.
Flooding & Fast Flowing Water	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor must gain an up to date weather forecast for the area and know how it will affect the gorge environment. Sections of fast flowing water must be bypassed if they pose a risk to the well being of the students.

Mountain Biking

The centre's guidelines are written with reference to those of the Scottish Mountain Bike Leader Award scheme (SMBLA).

Venues & Staff Qualifications

The following areas are regularly used for Mountain Bike journeys:

Foothills of the Black Mountains including Hay Forest
The Begwyns
The Taff Trail & Talybont area
Mynydd Illtud & Traeth Moor Nature Reserve

The minimum qualification required for leading journeys in these areas in summer conditions is the SMBLA Trail Cycle Leader Award (TCL) or the Mountain bike Instructor Award Scheme Level II (MIAS Level II). Staff must always work within the remit of their award.

General Considerations

When selecting a venue, the instructor must consider:

- The prevailing weather conditions.
- The effect of those weather conditions on the venue.
- The age, ability and needs of the participants.

Access agreements must be adhered to and the environmental impact of any biking considered before making a route choice.

Group Size

1 : 10

The member of MyL staff should hold the appropriate qualification as outlined above.

An accompanying member of group staff or an Assistant Instructor should also accompany the group. This person need not be experienced or qualified.

Equipment Considerations

The instructor will ensure that all mountain bikes are in a safe and roadworthy condition.

The instructor must ensure that all participants wear clothing appropriate to the conditions. In addition the following PPE must be worn:

- Approved cycling helmet.
- Suitable gloves.
- Eye Protection.
- Reflective jackets if using sections of road.

The following emergency equipment and tools must be available on the ride:

- A First Aid kit.
- Group Shelter.
- Emergency Food & Drink.
- Means of fixing a puncture and broken chain.

Maes y Lade Outdoors Mountain Biking Risk Assessment

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Level of Risk (H, M, L)	Control Measures
PPE Failure	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment is used according to the manufacturers instructions and guidance on intended use. The instructor must check all PPE before each session. In addition, formal PPE checks take place bi-annually. Students are briefed on the correct use of equipment in a manner appropriate to their age and intellect.
Mechanical Failure	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bikes are service regular. Bikes are checked by the instructor prior to the session AND at the start of the session through the Bike Briefing & Skills Course. Students are instructed in how to ride the bike to reduce the likelihood of mechanical failure, particularly broken chains.
Slips, trips & falls.	Students & Staff	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants must wear the designated PPE and appropriate footwear throughout the activity. The instructor must indicate terrain hazards that may cause a fall and provide clear briefings for participants in how to manage the hazard. Instructors must brief participants about control of speed. The instructor must choose a suitable route that takes into account the ability and co-ordination of the participants.
Fitness of the Group	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The instructor must select the venue taking into account the groups ability and aspirations. Alternative and escape routes should be planned and used if required.
Hypothermia	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants should be clothed appropriate to the conditions. Should conditions dictate participants must have access to extra warm clothing and the instructor should carry a group shelter, emergency clothing, food and drink.
Weather Conditions	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The instructor must have an accurate weather forecast and know how the weather will affect the venue.
Traffic	Students & Staff	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor to select an appropriate technique for moving the group along sections of road. Group must be fully briefed and, if required, a practice is to take place in a controlled area prior to riding on the road. Participants to be fully briefed on the dangers of riding on steep, narrow country roads.

Mountain Walking & Expeditions

The centre's guidelines are written with reference to those of the Mountain Leader Training United Kingdom (MLTUK).

Venues & Staff Qualifications

The following mountainous and upland areas are regularly used for walking activities:

Brecknockshire Black Mountains
Brecon Beacons
Carmarthenshire Black Mountain
The Begwyns
The Rhulen Hills

The minimum qualification required for leading journeys in these areas in summer conditions is the MLTUK Walking Group Leader Award (WGL).

Instructors leading walking activities in winter conditions must hold the MLTUK Winter Mountain Leader Award (Winter ML). The definition of winter conditions is:

“ When winter conditions, including snow and ice prevail or are forecast. This cannot be defined by a portion of the year.”
MLTUK

If it is unclear whether or not winter conditions will exist at a venue then the Centre Manager or the relevant Technical Adviser must be consulted before any walking commences. An alternative route allowing for the avoidance of areas that may be affected should be planned prior to the commencement of the activity.

General Considerations

When selecting a venue, the instructor must consider:

- The prevailing weather conditions.
- The effect of those weather conditions on the mountain.
- The age, ability and needs of the participants.

Access agreements must be adhered to.

Group Size

The ratio for mountain walking is dependent on:

- Age of participants.
- Ability of participants.
- The venue being used.

Typical ratios are shown below:

1 : 20

- *Rhiw Wen Common up to the Summit of Twmpa.*
- *The Begwyns & Rhulen Hills.*

1:10

- *The Brecknockshire Black Mountains (excluding areas highlighted above).*
- *The Carmarthenshire Black Mountain.*
- *The Brecon Beacons.*

The member of MyL staff should hold the appropriate qualification as outlined above.

An accompanying member of group staff or an Assistant Instructor should also accompany the group. This person need not be experienced or qualified.

Equipment Considerations

The instructor must ensure that all participants wear clothing appropriate to the conditions. Walking boots must be worn and warm and waterproof clothing should always be carried.

Appropriate emergency equipment must be available on the hill. This equipment must include:

- A First Aid kit.
- Group Shelter.
- Spare clothing.
- Emergency Food & Drink.

Maes y Lade Outdoors Mountain Walking & Expeditions Risk Assessment

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Level of Risk (H, M, L)	Control Measures
Slips, trips & bumps	Students & Staff	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants must wear appropriate footwear throughout the activity. The instructor must indicate slip hazards where they exist and provide clear briefings for participants in how to manage the hazard. The instructor must choose a suitable route in the mountains that takes into account the ability and co-ordination of the participants.
Falls	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The instructor must ensure that an effective safety system is employed to protect scrambling sections e.g. spotting, confidence roping. Participants should be given clear briefings as to how to overcome scrambling sections.
Fitness of the Group	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The instructor must select the venue taking into account the groups ability and aspirations. Alternative and escape routes should be planned and used if required.
Hypothermia	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants should be clothed appropriate to the conditions. Warm and waterproof clothing should always be carried. Should conditions dictate participants must have access to extra warm clothing and the instructor should carry a group shelter, emergency clothing and a warm drink.
Rockfall	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructors must avoid areas that are susceptible to rock fall. Participants must wear correctly fitted helmets when journeying in an area where the hazard cannot be avoided. Students should be briefed on the hazard and how it will be managed.
Steep Ground	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The instructor must select the venue taking into account the groups ability and aspirations.

Weather Conditions & Flooding	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instructor must have an accurate weather forecast and know how the weather will affect the mountain environment. • Journeys must not take place in known areas of flooding when conditions are forecast.
Burns from Stoves	Students	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instructor must ensure that stove training is provided / reinforced prior to an expedition starting. • Instructor to monitor students the first time they use a stove to ensure they are following best practice.
Lost Group (DofE Unaccompanied Expeditions)	Students	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instructor must ensure that navigation training is provided / reinforced prior to an expedition starting. • The instructor must ensure he/she has an overdue procedure for late groups including a search plan if required.

Orienteering

The centre's guidelines are written with reference to those of the British Orienteering Federation (BOF).

Venues & Staff Qualifications

The following venues are regularly used for orienteering activities:

MyL Grounds

Hay Forest

The Begwyns & Rhulen Hills

Rhiw Wen Common under 550m above sea level

The minimum qualification required for leading orienteering activities within MyL grounds and the surrounding Hay Forest is authorisation from the Head of Centre or the BOF UKCC Level II Award in Coaching Orienteering.

The minimum qualification for leading orienteering activities within the higher more exposed venues is the MLTUK Walking Group leader Award (WGL).

General Venue Considerations

When selecting a venue, the instructor must consider:

- The prevailing weather conditions.
- The effect of those weather conditions on the venue.
- The age, ability and needs of the participants.

Access agreements must be adhered to.

Group Size

1:30

- *MyL Grounds.*
- *Hay Forest.*

1:10

- *The Begwyns & Rhulen Hills.*
- *Rhiw Wen Common.*

The member of MyL staff should hold the appropriate qualification as outlined above.

An accompanying member of group staff or an Assistant Instructor should also accompany the group. This person need not be experienced or qualified.

These group sizes should be reduced if:

- The age, attitude or behaviour of the participants dictate.
- The group are focussed on learning or practicing particular navigation techniques.

Equipment Considerations

The instructor must ensure that all participants wear clothing appropriate to the weather and environmental conditions.

If the venue requires the participants to carry a whistle, instruction should be given in how to use the whistle to call for help in an emergency.

Group Management Considerations

The instructor must ensure the following before an orienteering activity commences:

- Participants are appropriately dressed for the activity. Participants must be briefed on underfoot conditions and the prevention of sprained ankles.
- Participants must be instructed as to the boundaries of the activity and any methods of relocation should they become disorientated.
- Novices and those under Year 8 must only participate in groups of two or more.
- Staff must be capable of travelling quickly round the site.
- Participants must be aware of the procedure for the instructor to terminate the session if required.

Maes y Lade Outdoors Orienteering Risk Assessment

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Level of Risk (H, M, L)	Control Measures
Slips, trips & falls	Students & Staff	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants must wear appropriate footwear throughout the activity. The instructor must indicate slip hazards where they exist and provide clear briefings for participants in how to manage the hazard. The instructor must choose suitable courses and control sites that take into account the ability and co-ordination of the participants.
Lost Students	Students	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants are taught navigational techniques to enable them to safely complete the course. Participants are briefed on the boundaries of the activity and how to re-locate if lost. Staff: Student ratio appropriate to initiate an effective search if required.
Fitness of the Group	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The instructor must select the venue taking into account the groups ability and aspirations.
Hypothermia	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants should be clothed appropriate to the conditions. Should conditions dictate participants must have access to extra warm clothing and the instructor should carry a group shelter, emergency clothing and a warm drink.
Forestry Activities – logging and vehicles on forest roads.	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructors should be aware of the current logging situation. Courses must avoid logging areas and any OAB areas must be clearly shown on the map. Participants must be briefed on any logging activities in the area.
Steep Ground	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The instructor must select the venue taking into account the groups ability and aspirations. Any hazard should be pointed out to students and students briefed in how to manage the hazard.
Weather Conditions	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The instructor must have an accurate weather forecast

			and know how the weather will affect the venue.
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Problem Solving / Teamwork & Leadership Exercises

No NGB Qualification exists for these activities therefore the centre operates in accordance with best practice.

MyL Staff Qualifications

Instructors can conduct problem solving exercises once they have received authorisation by the Centre Manager.

The Role of Accompanying Staff

Accompanying staff are encouraged to take an active part in delivering problem solving exercises, particularly to groups of young people. In these situations, some participants would not be under the direct instruction of a member of MyL staff. The Course Director must ensure that:

- ❑ Visiting staff are fully aware of the Code of Practice and Risk Assessments in place for the activities.
- ❑ Visiting staff are fully briefed on each of the exercises they will be leading.
- ❑ Visiting staff are completely happy with safely leading the activity and ensuring it meets the learning objectives of the session or course.

General Venue Considerations

When selecting a venue the instructor must consider:

- The prevailing weather conditions.
- The effect of those weather conditions on the gorge environment.
- The age, ability and needs of the participants.

Group Size

1 : 30

The member of MyL staff should have the appropriate authorisation as outlined above.

The ratio does not include accompanying staff supervising activities.

This number must be reduced if the exercise:

- Requires a high degree of competence.
- The participants require extra attention.
- The exercise requires the lifting and moving of heavy objects.

Equipment

The instructor must ensure that all participants wear:

- Clothing and footwear appropriate to the conditions.

Appropriate emergency equipment must be available. This equipment must include as a minimum:

- A First Aid kit.

Maes y Lade Outdoors Problem Solving Risk Assessment

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Level of Risk (H, M, L)	Control Measures
Slips, trips & falls	Students & Staff	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participants must wear appropriate footwear throughout the activity.• The instructor must indicate slip hazards where they exist and provide clear briefings for participants in how to manage the hazard.• The instructor must choose suitable tasks that take into account the ability and co-ordination of the participants.• Participants briefed on correct spotting techniques if appropriate.
Injuries associated with lifting and carrying equipment	Students and Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participants briefed (and shown) safe lifting and carrying techniques, if appropriate to age and intellect.• Appropriate teamwork to avoid overuse injuries.
Failure of Equipment	Students and Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Equipment checked prior to use.• Equipment used appropriately – instructor to brief participants on correct use of the equipment.
Weather Conditions	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The instructor must have an accurate weather forecast and plan tasks appropriate to the conditions expected and encountered.

Rock Climbing & Abseiling

The centre's guidelines are written with reference to those of the Mountain Leader Training United Kingdom (MLTUK).

Venues & Staff Qualifications

The following venues are regularly used for climbing and abseiling activities:

Dinas Rock

GR 912 080

Gower & SE Wales Guide, page 302

Morlais Quarry

GR 047 098

Gower & SE Wales Guide, page 349

Twynau Gwynion Quarry

GR 065 105

Gower & SE Wales Guide, page 376

Craig y Castell*

GR 173 167

Gower & SE Wales Guide, page 342

Hay on Wye Bridge

GR SO 228 426

Abseiling only

Llangors Ropes Centre

The minimum qualification required for leading climbing activities at these non-tidal venues is the MLTUK Single Pitch Award (SPA) or the Climbing Wall Award (CWA) if using Llangors.

Single pitch tidal venues and all multi pitch venues require the instructor to hold the Mountain Instructor Award (MIA) or the Mountain Instructor Certificate (MIC).

General Venue Considerations

When selecting a venue, the instructor must consider:

- The prevailing weather conditions.
- The effect of those weather conditions on the crag environment.
- The age, ability and ability of the participants.

Access agreements must be adhered to.

Venue Specific Considerations

* Groups wishing to use Llangattock Escarpment including Craig y Castell should contact Crickhowell Adventure Gear (Tel 01873 810 020) to make a booking. Bookings should be made 8 weeks in advance and there is a limit of 3 groups of up to 15 people per group per day. There is also a small charge.

Group Size

1 : 10

The member of MyL staff should hold the appropriate qualification as outlined above.

An accompanying member of group staff or an Assistant Instructor should also accompany the group. This person need not be experienced or qualified.

This ratio must be reduced if:

- The participants require extra support to learn safe practices such as belaying.
- The venue is sensitive to group use.

Equipment Considerations

The instructor must ensure that all participants wear:

- Clothing appropriate to the conditions.
- Helmets and harnesses. These must be worn by participants when undertaking graded rock climbs, bouldering, belaying, spotting and in any other situation when the instructor deems it necessary.

Appropriate emergency equipment must be available at the crag. This equipment must include:

- A First Aid kit
- Group Shelter
- Spare dynamic rope to be used in rescues.

Instructors must connect the student to the climbing rope using a re-threaded figure of eight. Students should not be clipped into a safety rope using a karabiner unless they are abseiling.

Maes y Lade Outdoors Rock Climbing & Abseiling Risk Assessment

Hazard	Who may be harmed	Level of Risk (H, M, L)	Control Measures
Equipment Failure	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment is used according to the manufacturers instructions and guidance on intended use. • The instructor must check PPE before every session. PPE is also formally inspected bi-annually. • Students are briefed on the correct use of equipment in a manner appropriate to their age and intellect.
Slips, trips & bumps	Students & Staff	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants must wear appropriate footwear throughout the activity. • The instructor must indicate slip hazards where they exist and provide clear briefings for participants in how to manage the hazard. • The instructor must choose suitable routes to and from abseil points.
Falls from less than 1m	Students & Staff	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instructor must choose a suitable area to conduct bouldering exercises and games. • The instructor must set a height limit for all bouldering activities. • The instructor must use spotting to safeguard students whilst bouldering.
Falls from more than 1m	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can only climb graded rock climbs when safeguarded by a rope. • The instructor must choose an appropriate belay system taking into account the ability of participants. • Participants must be provided with a clear briefing and demo on how to belay. No climber should leave the ground until participants have practiced this technique and the student can belay with confidence.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The instructor must position him or herself so that they can intervene to ensure safety if peer to peer belaying is used.
Entanglement	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructor must ensure that the participant's hair and clothing will not catch in any climbing equipment prior to the commencement of any activity.
Crag Fast Climber	Students & Staff	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The instructor must select climbs that reduce the likelihood of a participant becoming crag fast/unable to be lowered off. The instructor must have a means of rescuing participants at any point during the climb.
Hypothermia	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants should be clothed appropriate to the conditions. Instructor must gain an up to date weather forecast for the area and know how it will affect the crag environment. Should conditions dictate participants must have access to extra warm clothing and the instructor should carry a group shelter, emergency clothing and a warm drink.
Rock fall	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Instructors must avoid areas that are susceptible to rock fall. Participants must wear correctly fitted helmets throughout the activity. Students should be briefed on the hazard and how it will be managed e.g. approaching the abseil at Dinas.
Strain/Overuse Injuries	Students & Staff	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants should warm up thoroughly before starting to climb. Participants should progress from easy climbs to more demanding ones to allow their bodies to adapt to the stresses placed upon them by climbing.