

Hazards Table for school visits to Hinchingsbrooke Country Park

(Updated December 2014)

Significant hazards we have identified	What we have done to minimize the hazards	What we want you to do to minimize the hazards	Your notes and specific hazards you have identified
Slips & trips	This is a natural site so the ground is uneven, eg. rabbit holes, tree stumps. It may be slippery and have debris underfoot. We check the site at least every other day as part of our site checks and deal with any major hazards. There is a large field for running around at lunchtime although this is also uneven and has small holes in it.	The children are safest to walk, not run, on very uneven ground and are alert & under control when moving around the site.	
Dogs within the Park	We will reassure the children most dogs are very friendly here but warn the children not to stroke or approach dogs. We ask owners to pick up dog poo & provide bins for its disposal and Rangers pick up any seen in the areas children will be working. We have a dog-free (poo-free) area around the play equipment which can be used for lunchtime.	Supervise the children and remind them not to approach or stroke dogs which come too close. Politely ask dog owners who do not control their dogs to take them away from the children. Ensure the children wash their hands before lunch and at the end of the day. Look out for dog poo in all areas you are working and report it to the Ranger, or pick it up, as soon as possible. Ensure you know which children may get upset if a dog comes too close.	
Getting lost	We offer all leaders a tour of the site at the pre-visit and encourage leaders/helpers to visit the site in advance (free parking can be arranged). Maps will be provided and your route will be based on red-numbered or blue-lettered posts. We will run through your route on a large map during our introductory talk.	Warn the children in advance they must stay with their group. Supervise the children closely and do regular head counts. Set boundaries for each activity, including lunchtime, so they do not stray too far. Ensure you know which posts you are following. Group leaders should familiarise themselves with the map in advance.	

Sunstroke/sunburn & changes in the weather	We have a classroom for use in inclement weather and for eating their lunch in very sunny weather, but we do stay outside as much as possible. We will come inside if there is lightning.	Please inform us if you think activities should be moved inside, depending upon the rain/temperature & children's well being. Ensure the children are dressed for the weather (wellies, raincoats or sun-cream, sunhats & trousers, NOT shorts or sandals). Feel free to bring bottles of water & cups to be taken out on very hot days.	
Dirty hands	Hand washing facilities are provided in the Countryside Centre and the nearby Visitors' Centre.	Ensure the children keep their hands out of eyes & mouths during the day. Ensure the children wash their hands with soap before eating and at the end of the day.	
Child protection issues. The site is open to the public at all times.	All Rangers have been DBS checked. Rangers will not supervise the children in a 1:1 situation. Members of the public should not be in the Countryside Centre only participants of a conference in the other room. We have a sign on the main door informing people it is a private building. When a member of staff is in the Countryside Centre office they try to stop strangers coming into the building – this office is not manned at all times. The door in the toilet corridor is kept locked but the fire door in the corridor may be opened easily from the inside.	Ensure correct levels of supervision so Rangers are not included within adult to child ratios. Make sure children stay within sight at all times and regular head counts are done. Follow your school policy if a child has to be removed from the group, eg. to go to the toilet. Supervise children at all times, inside & outside the Countryside Centre. If you are unsure who a visitor to the building is then please politely ask them to speak the Ranger, a member of staff in the office or in the café.	
Allergies such as hay fever, food or bee/wasp stings	Due to the nature of the site there are wasps & bees, pollen producing plants and nut trees. We will tell the children what to do with "buzzy" minibeasts, if caught in sweep nets, in our introductory talk. You will know in advance what activities you are undertaking (eg. if it involves collecting autumn seeds, handling food etc). Please tell us if any children have severe allergies, especially peanuts, which may form part of lunches.	Ensure group leaders are aware of allergies the children in their group have & children have the correct medication with them. It is your responsibility to dispense the medication and /or know what to do in the event of a reaction. Advise children to ignore flying insects rather than flapping hands.	

<p>Nettles, prickles & berries</p>	<p>We keep nettles & thistles back or mown from the main paths as much as is practical and choose the clearest areas for each activity. If we are leading an activity we check the children know what nettles look like and remind them to stay away. We instruct children not to put berries near to their mouth.</p>	<p>It is a good idea to show children these plants before your visit. Ensure the children are aware of patches of nettles & thistles in your activity areas and work away from these areas. Ensure the children wear trousers and trainers/wellies. Shorts and open toed sandals are not suitable. Closely supervise the children if they are collecting natural materials, especially in the autumn.</p>	
<p>Water (lakes, ponds & streams)</p>	<p>The Ranger leading pond dipping will ask the children to sit or kneel on the platform, depending upon their age, and limit movement of people around the platform.</p> <p>Activities will not be planned next to water unless that is part of the session.</p>	<p>Ensure the children do not go near the water without adult supervision & stay kneeling or sitting all the time they are pond dipping (depending upon their age). Ensure children listen and follow the Ranger's instructions when pond dipping. Make sure children are carefully supervised while moving on & off the platform.</p> <p>There is a risk of Weils disease from all open water bodies so please be aware of the symptoms. We encourage anyone with fresh cuts/grazes/bad eczema to wear disposable gloves or use waterproof plasters.</p>	
<p>Mound next to Visitors' Centre, slide & zip-wire, gym equipment & trim trail</p>	<p>Rangers check the site & equipment at least every other day for hazards.</p>	<p>It is up to the group leaders whether they allow the children to play on the mound, zip-wire, trim trail & slide at lunchtime. We recommend there is an adult on the slide mound and the children do not go down behind it into the woods (there is a wire fence running behind the equipment). Please be aware of members of the public and very small children using the play equipment at the same time The gym equipment is NOT suitable for under 12's so must not be used by primary school children.</p>	
<p>Vehicles on site</p>	<p>We drive slowly around the site & will not be carrying out unusual manoeuvres within the vicinity of the children. Both the main car park and the one by the Countryside Centre are open to the public.</p>	<p>Use the path through the woods rather than the road to get to the classroom. Ensure the children do not go into the Countryside Centre car park. Please be aware of bicycles and horses which may use the Country Park.</p>	

Unexpected occurrences	Not every situation can be predicted. The café and/or Countryside Centre are manned most days so Rangers can be contacted in emergencies. The Ranger in charge of your visit will carry a radio and/or a mobile phone and give each leader their number. Rangers carry out site checks at least every other day and deal with hazards. All Rangers are first aid trained. First aid kits are located in both classrooms in the Countryside Centre and the Café.	Ensure your leaders know where to find the Café. It is advisable that each group carries a mobile phone and has the number of the Ranger in charge and school leader to hand. Please inform the Ranger in charge of any near misses or unusual occurrences. We suggest the use of a whistle or other signal to call back the children.	
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The aim of the day is for the children to learn about the natural environment whilst having fun. Allowing the children a little bit of freedom is Ok. Encouragement from the group leaders & parent helpers and good spirits is the key to a successful day.

Leaders with fears of minibeasts are encouraged to hide this fear from the children else it spreads very easily!

Please also remember:

There may be other people in the Countryside Centre so please stay in the room you are allocated and supervise the children when they go to the toilets so they do not run/shout or go out of the wrong door. Please keep the children quiet when working inside the classroom and whilst entering/leaving the building.