

Activity Risk Assessment

Activity	Canoeing				
Address of premises	Hesley Wood Activity Centre, White Lane, Chapeltown, S35 2YH				
Author of this risk assessment	Megan Hughes				
Issue Date	02/07/2024				
Review	This document is reviewed annually. We can review it sooner if needed.				
Reviewed by	Luke Kitching	Date	13.03.2026	Changes?	Yes, see review page
Reviewed by	Luke Kitching	Date	23.05.2026	Changes?	Yes, see review page
Checked by Operations Director	Andy Moore <i>AK Moore</i>	Date	01.06.2026		

Explanation of Risk Rating: Risk Rating = Probability x Severity			Probability			Rating	Actions resulting from Risk Rating
			Unlikely 1	Likely 2	Certain 3		
Severity	1	Minor injury or damage	1	2	3	1-3	Low Risk: Carry on, ensuring controls are in place. No further controls required.
	2	Major injury or damage	2	4	6	4-6	Medium Risk: Implement extra controls if practical to reduce risk to low. Monitor risk level to ensure no increase.
	3	Severe injury or damage, Serious illness or death.	3	6	9	7-9	High Risk: Stop activity immediately. Implement further controls to reduce risk if possible. Find alternative method.

The Hesley Management Team will monitor and review the controls to reduce risk in accordance with South Yorkshire Scouts Health & Safety Policy.

The information contained within this Risk Assessment should be taken as the minimum requirement and

is not to be considered exhaustive.

What is the hazard? How might people be harmed?	Risk Level (with existing control measures)			Who is at risk?	What are the control measures?
	Probability	Severity	Rating		
Water, i.e. Drowning.	2	3	6	Participants, Instructors.	When on the water, everyone must wear appropriate buoyancy aid (B.A.) and helmet. Staff will refer to the Emergency Action Plans. • Discovery in the water • Serious injury to a participant Training to be conducted only by someone with the appropriate awards • Sheltered Water Coach (Kayak, Canoe, SUP) <u>Canoe sign offs:</u> • Pass paddle sport rescue training or foundation safety and rescue training, this is assessed by the technical advisor. (This allows you to become bank support. Bank support counts towards your shadow hours, and a minimum of 3 shadow hours are needed). • Pass Paddle Sport Instructor award to lead sessions with a bank support (Minimum of 3 sessions with water sports coach before you can instruct without the coach). • First session as lead instructor will then be assessed by the water sports coach. • Water sports coach will conduct lone working without a bank support sign off, when they and the instructor, feel they are confident and competent. • An instructor without a Paddle sport qualification can instruct Scout groups if they hold a Scouting Permit for water sports. Water sports coach is allowed to instruct a canoe session without the need of a bank support due to the nature of the qualification held.

				Radio must be taken to the lake to call for help in case of difficulties. Maximum of 10 young people on the water at any one time (2 in a boat), 1 instructor, the competent adults that are the leaders of the group and a bank support if one is needed. Number of Competent adults will vary depending on the number of adults a group brings. Bank support will be needed if the lead instructor isn't signed off to lone work by the water sports coach. 11 or 12 participants on the water can happen but must go through the water sports coach & specific requirements must be upheld, these are; • Both staff members on the session must be in a boat of their choice and on the water with the participants • Session can only take place if they are the only group on the water No participants under the age of 6 are allowed on the water. Instructor to check with group leaders of any weak or non-swimmers. <u>Scout Specific: 9.13.1.3 Participation of non-swimmers</u> A non-swimmer may take part in water activities, at the discretion of the person in charge, only if certain precautions are taken: - any non-swimmer must wear a lifejacket or buoyancy aid of approved design and be in the charge of an adult. This does not apply for swimming, paddling or activities near water. - there must be no more than one non-swimmer in any craft, unless a one-to-one ratio is maintained, for example one competent adult to one non-swimmer. - in the case of single-handed craft, this should only be on C or B1 Waters (see POR 9.13.4) with supervision on a one-to-one basis, for example one competent adult to one non-swimmer. - where non-swimmers are taking part in swimming activities (as defined in POR 9.13.9), they must be under the direct supervision, in the water, by an over 16-year-old who is deemed to be a swimmer and has strong water confidence. This must not exceed two non-swimmers to one over 16-year-old.
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Cold weather, i.e. Hypothermia.	2	2	4	All Involved	Participants advised to bring spare clothes to the lake. A safety bag will be brought to the lake by staff and have First Aid essentials. Radio to be taken to the lake to call for Emergency Aid. Lake sessions closed from 1st October to 1st April for guests. Training for staff will be held for staff prior to April 1st to ensure we have an operational water sports team. Staff will refer to the following policies: • Adverse weather A Poster is also provided on the trailer with advice on COLD, HEAT and INFECTION.
Water-borne bacteria, i.e. Infection.	1	2	2	All Involved	Advise customers to wash their hands after activity and shower where possible. Provide info via leptospirosis poster on the box trailer door. A water quality test will be conducted at the beginning of each season and this checks for the below. • Coliform/E.coli Analysis • Enterococci/Streptococci • pH Level • Conductivity • Cyanobacteria Then in addition to this additional in-house testing to be completed when suspected changes to the water, such as, in high rainfall or when other notable changes are reported. Green liquid dye is also used frequently, which blocks the UV light and starves the growth of algae and weeds to prevent formation of growth.

Warm weather, i.e. heat exhaustion or heatstroke	1	2	2	All Involved	Session to be adapted to reduce the risk of overheating (e.g. self-rescues from the lake back onto the rafts, less energetic pre-session warmups, hydrate before and during session). Group will be made aware to bring hats/caps, water bottles, sun cream and appropriate clothing with them. Staff will refer to the following policies: • Adverse weather
Paddle strike, e.g. bruising to arms, legs or head from being hit by a paddle.	2	1	2	Participants, Instructors	On the water: Instructors to explain to participants the correct behaviour with paddles to prevent accidentally striking others. Helmets and buoyancy aids must be worn when on the water.
Broken glass or other debris on lakebed or shore, i.e. Cuts & gashes.	2	2	4	Participants, Instructors.	Appropriate footwear to be worn by all participants (e.g. old trainers, water specific trainer). When water levels are low, avoid areas with known hidden objects i.e. tree stumps at the deep/far end of the lake. Staff will remove visible dangerous debris from lakebed, only if it is safe to do so. Staff to move debris on lakeside – waste bags will be provided in the box in the water sports trailer.
Disorderly behaviour that causes injury.	2	2	4	All Involved	Group's own leader must be in attendance. Maximum of 10 young people on the water at any one time (2 in a boat), 1 instructor, the competent adults that are the leaders of the group and a bank support if one is needed. Number of Competent adults will vary depending on the number of adults a group brings. Bank support will be needed if the lead instructor isn't signed off to lone work by the water sports coach.

					If behaviour becomes disorderly, stop the session – or remove individual participants from the session. Staff will refer to the Emergency Action Plan • Overcrowding and Disorderly behaviour										
Hazards arising from the actions of Instructor/staff.	1	2	2	All Involved	All Instructors to have passed the PSRT or FSRT which will be assessed by the technical advisor. Water sports coach to periodically observe sessions to support both safety and staff development. Near misses and accidents to be reported and discussed at manager meetings so that we can consider any ways to minimise the chance of recurrence.										
Equipment failure, e.g. cuts, bruises.	1	2	2	Participants, Instructors.	Staff will follow the following policy when dealing with equipment failures. • 'Equipment policy'										
Strong winds or storms.	1	2	2	All Involved	Weather will be checked prior to the session starting and the wind speeds will be assessed via an anemometer. Staff to constantly check the wind speeds and if the benchmark hits (see table below), the session will be cancelled. This benchmark may be lower depending on group dynamics (e.g. older/more experienced participants may be stronger and might be able to manage higher winds compared to a younger group. Site staff will assess on the day, and the Water sports coach will make appropriate decisions). Session will be cancelled in case of a thunderstorm. Staff will refer to the following policies: • Adverse weather <table><tr><th>Wind including Gusts</th><th><18 mph (force 4 and below)</th><th>19-31 mph (force 5/6)</th><th>32-39 mph (force 7/8)</th><th>>40 mph (force 8 and above)</th></tr><tr><td>Water sports</td><td>Fine to run, though be aware of</td><td>Consider cancelling depending on size</td><td>Cancel</td><td>Cancel</td></tr></table>	Wind including Gusts	<18 mph (force 4 and below)	19-31 mph (force 5/6)	32-39 mph (force 7/8)	>40 mph (force 8 and above)	Water sports	Fine to run, though be aware of	Consider cancelling depending on size	Cancel	Cancel
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						impact of higher gusts on water & ability of the group when it comes to the higher speeds.	and weight of participants.		
Unloading from trailers, e.g. boards falling on people, back injury, carrying equipment.	2	1	2	All Involved	Unloading boats: Only staff are to take boats off the trailer. Adults & participants can help carry the boats to the bankside (if needed) after staff have explained the manual handling procedure. Must have a minimum of 2 people to carry one canoe. Carrying equipment: Adults of the group & participants can carry their own paddle, helmet and buoyancy aid once they have been allocated by a staff member and shown how to correctly fit it. Staff will refer to the following policies: • Manuel Handling				

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Falls onto lakebed or another boat i.e. ankle injury, injury from landing on hands or knees.	1	1	2	Participants, Instructors.	Standing in boats: Instructor to assess group behaviour and that water levels are deemed acceptable before allowing anyone to stand in boats. Participants to be told not to stand in boats near shore. At the end of session: Everyone on the water to kneel or sit down as they approach the lakeside before emerging off their boat.

Falls onto tree branches, e.g. bruises, cuts, eye injuries.	2	1	2	Participants	At the far end of the lake, there are some semi-submerged branches. Instructor to not do racing games, or games that have a high likelihood of uncontrolled falling in around the tree branches, unless participants are kneeling or are very proficient & mature.
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Related Risk Documents

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Canoeing, Review Log – Canoeing, Equipment Policy, EAP for Overcrowded & Disorderly Behaviour, Adverse Weather policy, EAP for serious injury to a participant EAP for Discovery in the water, Manual Handling policy and Informational posters for COLD, HEAT, and INFECTION.

Risk benefit statement

Canoeing provides opportunities for participants to develop physical fitness, confidence, teamwork, and water safety skills while engaging with the natural environment. As with any water-based activity, there are risks such as capsizing, changing weather conditions, or slips during launching and landing. These risks are managed through qualified supervision, the use of buoyancy aids, appropriate safety briefings and careful monitoring of weather and water conditions. With these control measures in place, the educational and wellbeing benefits of canoeing outweigh the remaining risks.

Review Log

<u>Reviewed by</u>	<u>Date of review</u>	<u>Reason for review</u>	<u>Changes made</u>	<u>Actions required</u>	<u>If actions have been completed insert date completed</u>

Aaron King	01/09/2024	General Review	General review comparing July 24 to our experience on the sessions. Adjustments made especially around how we mitigate risk of temperature and falls. Removed Shelter, sleeping bag, spare jacket and drinking water from exposure section.	Approval from Andy/Activity Management	06/09/2024
Alyssa Jordan	03/12/2024	Standardise and quality control	Page numbers added to improve document navigation. Common risks that apply across water activities are now highlighted under green heading. Session-specific risks are placed under blue heading.	Reissue RA to all involved in water sports	24/02/2025
Dan Crawford, Megan Hughes and Alyssa Jordan	10/03/2025	Water Sports Technical Advisor Onboarding	General review. Adjustments made to ensure in line with operating procedures.	Reissue RA to all involved in water sports	14/04/2025
Megan Hughes and Michelle Lambert	04/06/2025	General Review	Added in POR rules	N/A	
Luke Kitching	13.03.2026	Luke has taken over from Megan & had a meeting with technical advisor. Changes made after a general review.	Changed some of the wording, added in policies & EAP that were missing and added in new training guidelines	Approval from Andy	07/04/2026
Luke Kitching	23.05.2026	Standardise and quality control	New participant ratios added and U6s no longer allowed on the water	Approval from Andy	01.06.2026

Version three publication date: 01/06/2026

Approved By Operational Director:
Andy Moore



Date: 01.06.2026

Instructions for Group Leaders: Canoeing, Raft Building and Paddleboards

Before you come:

1. Check out our advice on COLD, HEAT and INFECTION.

COLD at our lake

On really cold days, there's a risk of hypothermia. Here's helpful information for group leaders and participants.

What causes hypothermia?
It's when you get too cold and your body temperature drops below 35°C. This can be because you:

- Stay out in the cold too long
- Don't wear enough clothes
- Have wet clothes and get cold
- Fall into cold water

Hypothermia: What to look for?

At first you might notice:

- Shivering
- Pale, cold and dry skin – skin and lips may turn blue or grey (on black or brown skin this may be easier to see on the palms of hands)

You might also notice:

- Slurred speech
- Slow breathing
- Tiredness or confusion

When it gets even worse, you might notice:

- A slow heartbeat (measured by the person's pulse)
- That their pulse may be difficult to find (because it's much weaker than normal)
- They stop shivering

What to do!

- Quickly get them indoors (or to shelter) and call 999
- Remove any wet clothing, wrap them in a blanket, sleeping bag or dry towel
- Make sure their head is covered
- Give them warm drinks and some sugary food like chocolate if they're fully awake
- Keep them awake by talking to them
- Make sure someone stays with them

Do not:

- Don't use a hot shower or hot water bottle to warm them up
- Don't rub their arms, legs, feet or hands

Huh?! What is afterdrop?

When you get out of cold water, your body temperature can continue to drop even half an hour after you get out. This is called afterdrop.

- When you're in the cold water, your body reduces blood flow to your cold skin and outer flesh and pools warm blood near your vital organs
- When you get out of cold water, cold from your skin and outer flesh then transfers to the rest of your body

So, if someone's gotten very cold, keep an eye on them even after they're inside and dry.

HEAT at our lake

On really hot days, there's a risk of heat exhaustion, or even worse, heat stroke. The adults in charge of your visit will have made sure that there are enough first aiders, but it's a helpful reminder – especially when you're on the bank.

Heat exhaustion: What to watch for?

- Feeling faint or dizzy
- Excessive sweating
- Clammy skin
- Nausea or vomiting
- Muscle cramps

You might also notice:

- Headache or confusion
- Loss of appetite and feeling sick
- Fast breathing or pulse
- Temperature of 38°C or above
- Feeling very thirsty

Heat exhaustion: Follow these 4 steps!

- Move them to a cool place – out of the sun
- Remove all unnecessary clothing like shoes and socks
- Get them to drink cool water or, if available, a sports or rehydration drink
- Cool their skin – sponge them with cool water and fan them. Cold packs, wrapped in a cloth and put under the armpits or on the neck are good too

Stay with them until they're better (They should start to cool down and feel better within 30 minutes).

Heatstroke: What to watch for?

You may see:

- Someone still unwell after 30 min in treatment for heat exhaustion
- A very high temperature (e.g. 40°C)
- Hot skin that's not sweating
- Fast heartbeat
- Fast breathing or shortness of breath
- Feeling confused
- A seizure
- Loss of consciousness

Put the person in the recovery position if they lose consciousness.

Heat stroke: What to do!

- First aid is not enough to treat heat stroke.
- Seek urgent medical help – Call 999
- Meanwhile, continue the four steps for heat exhaustion.

How can we prevent all this?

- Drink more cold drinks, especially if you're active
- Wear light-colored, loose clothing
- Avoid the sun between 11am and 3pm
- Avoid extreme exercise

INFECTION at lakes and rivers

We're at a lake. That means there's a small risk of you catching leptospirosis (also called Weil's disease when it's severe).

Leptospirosis: What to look for?

If you have any of these symptoms in the next 4 weeks, you must contact your doctors:

- A high temperature (usually between 38°C and 40°C)
- Aches and pain, especially in the legs and back
- Headache
- Being sick or feeling sick
- Diarrhoea
- Loss of appetite
- Redness of the eyes

Most infections result in no or only mild symptoms. But you may need medicines or even hospital treatment. That's why you must contact doctors and say your symptoms and what water activities you have done.

Like the NHS say, we won't let this small risk stop us enjoying the water. But we will make people aware just in case.

It can look like flu

Leptospirosis can look like flu. So, if you feel like you've got flu (e.g. fever, aches and pains), make sure you contact your doctors and say your symptoms and that you've been doing water activities.

How does leptospirosis happen?

There's a germ that lives in animals (e.g. rats, cows). The animals spread the germ when they wee. In dry conditions, the germs die really quickly in moist places (like lakes and rivers), the germs can last for many days.

If the germs come into your body (for example through cuts or through your mouth), you can become infected.

It's a rare illness in the UK and affects less than 100 people per year. Most infected people either work with animals or catch it abroad.

It is so rare that it shouldn't stop anyone enjoying water activities. But you should still know about it – just in case.

How to say the words

- Leptospirosis: Say "lep-toe-spy-row-sis"
- Weil's disease: Say "Vee's disease"

2. Tell participants (and their parents) what kit they need. Make sure it's clear that flip flops and loose crocs come off in the lake so just aren't suitable. Old trainers or water shoes are. Feel free to copy and paste this visual guide:

Do wear:

Old trainers

Lace up pumps

Non-lace up snug fitting pumps

Water shoes



Don't wear:

Crocs

Flip Flops

Wellies



They'll also need:

- Clothes that they'll be wearing that are suitable for the time of year / expected weather.
- A towel, change of clothes in a bag.

- Drink / drinks bottle
- Suntan cream (if hot weather expected).

At the session

- Discretely inform the instructor about any non-swimmers or weak swimmers. Much of the lake is shallow (so youngsters can stand and walk to the side) but we still need to know if participants can't swim 50m (50m is our rule of thumb for competent swimmer - even though in practice they are never more than 15m away from the shore).
- Discretely inform the instructor about any special needs or disabilities (SEND) we need to be aware of. NB: If it's complex SEND, talk to us before the day. We do our best to include everyone – we do even better at this if we know in advance about it, for example, profound deafness or a pre-verbal autistic teen.

After the session

- Get the group to wash hands before eating.
- If it's been especially hot or cold, ensure the group get cooled down / warmed up.