

Buckden House

Land based activity – Operating Guidelines

Low Level Activity – Riverside Dales Way Walks (Kettlewell to Buckden, and Deepdale Bridge to Buckden)

Hazards

In addition to the hazards that you identify at the time, please note the following:

Streams and rivers in the area can rise rapidly and unexpectedly after heavy / continuous rain or snow melt. Be aware that streams and rivers are powerful in spate; youngsters will be swept off their feet long before adults. Wet rocks will be slippery. Footwear **must** be worn if paddling due to glass and sharp rocks. Do not allow swimming in pools, there may be underwater hazards and the water extremely cold. **Be very aware of the deep / swift water while walking alongside the River Wharfe**, and the often steep and undercut banks.

Cars can appear very suddenly along the narrow roads. Be alert and keep your presence on the tarmac to a minimum. Consider your position when on the tarmac. Farm vehicles and machinery can be encountered on and off-road, especially near farm yards. Also, mountain bikes can be encountered on some parts of the route.

Caves, open shafts, and potholes exist throughout limestone areas; this includes the hillside above the Dales Way. You might not see them until very close, or they may be concealed in shakeholes or amongst boulders, or covered by planks. Some are very deep. There are no fences or warnings. Cave entrances can appear inviting but can have pitches (drops) immediately inside. *Keep out of all caves*. DO NOT allow running ahead, or hide and seek games, or unsupervised activity in these areas.

Getting lost in this area can be dangerous, due to featureless moorland, steep slopes and crags, streams and rivers, and open shafts / potholes. For this reason, you **must** keep to the identified routes along the valley floor.

Barbed wire exists on a number of fences and walls alongside the footpaths that you will be following. Brief your group beforehand so that they can take extra care, especially when congregating near stiles and gates.

From Kettlewell via the river bank: be aware on the initial road section when leaving the village / car park, vehicles often travel excessively fast. Be aware of blind bends / hump back bridge. You **must not** head for Moor End or the Arncliffe footpath. *Note that the correct route drops down to the right immediately after going through the first gate at Kettlewell bridge.*

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From Kettlewell via the Cross Wood footpath: take care to follow the correct route from the Blue Bell Inn up the narrow road to the lane by Cam Lodge. Continue up the footpath and turn left at the top; *generally follow the power lines up the valley* before crossing the river by the Starbotton footbridge.

Should you need to abandon the walk at Starbotton it is recommended that you phone the Centre for a pick up rather than walk back along the road. *The stepping stones* at Starbotton can be slippery even in low water conditions. If water conditions are high and access is needed to Starbotton use the footbridge. *Chain and wire bridges* exist across the river. NEVER allow students to play on or use the bridges. *Emergency access* by road is only possible by crossing the footbridge and heading into Starbotton. There is limited mobile phone coverage, however there are farms, a public telephone, and a pub in Starbotton.

From Deepdale Bridge: the route passes through several farms; be alert to machinery and vehicles, and also farm animals (dogs, cows, horses). In unsettled or wet weather, be aware that dry limestone river beds can quickly become raging torrents, with sudden and unexpected flood pulses. *Emergency access* by road is possible at Yockenthwaite and Hubberholme. There is no mobile phone coverage, however there are several farms along the route, and a pub at Hubberholme. *The Church and graveyard* in Hubberholme is an attraction with its many carved mice in the pews. Visitors are welcome at most times. Be aware to the sensitive nature of the building and grounds, unsupervised exploration is discouraged.

Operating guidelines

Clothing for staff and students should include a warm sweater and waterproofs, and if appropriate hat and gloves and / or sun protection. Please abide by the country code, remembering to leave gates as you find them, NEVER to climb drystone walls, to leave no litter and not to disturb wildlife and farm animals. Carry out regular checks to ensure that everyone is accounted for; consider the use of a buddy system.

Staff

Leaders should have prior personal experience of the area and route, and be confident in their ability to manage the walk safely and educationally. First Aid competence is required and a first aid kit and polythene survival bag **must** be carried. This is the absolute minimum. Spare clothing and mobile phone may well be useful. In bad or forecasted deteriorating weather a Group Shelter should be carried.

The maximum number of students in a group is 10. There must be a minimum of 2 staff with each group.

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