



Great Hagley, Hopton Castle, Shropshire, SY7 0QF

## **Health and Safety Policy Statement**

At the Great Escape Company we recognise the importance of safety; we strive to achieve and maintain the highest standards of safety in the adventurous outdoor activities we offer. We want our clients to feel rewarded and exhilarated by the experiences we provide.

It is our aim to promote a feeling of achievement by encouraging our clients to face and overcome the challenges posed by our activities. This sense of achievement can be immensely beneficial; it can stimulate both personal and social development in individuals. However, it is impossible to foster such a sense of achievement in an individual without exposing them to a credible risk of failing.

Therefore we manage safety to reduce risks to the lowest practicable level without removing them completely or reducing them to such an extent that they render the challenges posed by our activities as meaningless. In short, we aim to provide activities that strike a suitable balance between risk and reward.

We do this by:

- Carefully planning and installing activities
- Assessing the risks posed by the activities and comparing them to the benefits to be gained by participants
- Carrying out regular inspections, checks and tests to ensure that the activities maintain a high standard of safety
- Employing an independent specialist inspector to examine all equipment on a regular basis
- Employing competent instructors who have appropriate qualifications and experience.
- Providing safety equipment to our clients
- Providing instruction to our clients on how to carry out each activity safely
- Providing individuals and groups with appropriate information so that they are aware of all the risks they face before they visit the estate and have the chance to decide whether or not to accept them

Our activities take place on the Hagley Estate, a 120 acre estate set in a rural and remote part of Shropshire. The estate is undeveloped, it contains paths with loose stones, mud, grass, tree roots and steep slopes. There are unguarded drops, open ponds, deep rivulets, loose branches, stinging insects and numerous other natural hazards found in the countryside. However it also contains wonderful views, star filled night skies, abundant wildlife and the peace and quiet of the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. We do not wish to diminish the appeal of this wild and remote place by putting up signs and fences or making paths to urban standards.

Although these are natural hazards, we remind our guests that they will encounter the resulting risks when on the estate.

To maintain a suitable balance between safety and conservation, we use the Guiding Principles of the Visitor Safety Group (Formerly the Visitor Safety in the Countryside Group) as a framework for our decisions. Ref: [www.vscg.org/guiding-principles/](http://www.vscg.org/guiding-principles/)

If an injury is sustained by a client then we can provide a response as all our staff and instructors are first aid trained and have access to first aid kits. We also have public liability insurance of £10 million.

We also strive to maintain the same high safety standards for our employees. We ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all our employees through the provision and maintenance of:

- Safe plant and equipment
- Safe systems of work including the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances
- Information, instruction, training and supervision
- Safe workplace with adequate welfare facilities
- Assessing risks and consulting with employees on the required control measures

This policy statement came into force on: 1<sup>st</sup> February 2020

We are committed to reviewing our policy and good practice annually. This policy statement and accompanying procedures were last reviewed on: 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Signed:

Date: 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023

Print name: Mark Willis

Position: Managing Director

## **Responsibilities**

### **Director**

The Director has overall responsibility for providing accommodation, facilities and activities that do not pose uncontrolled risks to participants employees, visitors or contractors.

Specifically, the Director will:

- Ensure that risks are eliminated or reduced to the lowest practical level, following the principles set out in the Great Escape health and safety policy statement.
- Commission competent persons to install, test, maintain and service plant and equipment used by and for the Great Escape. Competent means someone with the appropriate combination of skills, experience and knowledge and, where relevant, membership of an appropriate trade body.
- Employ competent persons (as defined above) to act as activity leaders and facilitators
- Carry out periodic inspections of the grounds, accommodation and activities, or arrange a competent person to do so, to identify obvious uncontrolled hazards and defects.
- Remedy identified uncontrolled hazards and defects or prevent access to them to prevent them from causing harm.
- Carry out risk assessments on the accommodation, facilities and activities used by participants and visitors and recoding the significant findings.
- Carry out risk assessments on the activities undertaken by employees and contractors and recording the significant findings.
- Provide and maintain systems and equipment to allow employees to work safely (including PPE)
- Provide and maintain systems and equipment to respond to accidents and ill health (including first aid provisions)
- Provide and maintaining systems and equipment to respond to emergencies (including fire)
- Provide the relevant information and instruction to allow employees to work safely and participants to use the activities, facilities and accommodation safely.
- Provide additional training and supervisions to employees upon starting and periodically thereafter, as required.
- Monitor the effectiveness of health and safety measures, including reported accidents.
- Consulting with employees about the effectiveness of any measure provided in the interests of safety
- Reviewing and revising this policy

### **Employees**

All employees must:

- Co-operate with the Director on health and safety matters;
- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety; and
- Report all health and safety concerns to the Director.

## **Arrangements**

### **Identifying risks**

We routinely identify work related hazards and risks through:

- Workplace inspections and observations (both formal and informal)
- Consultation with employees (both formal and informal)
- Analysis of recorded incidents and accidents

### **Electrical systems and equipment**

We ask employees to report any obvious defects with electrical equipment. We maintain systems and equipment to prevent danger through periodic inspection and testing by a competent person.

### **Accidents and first aid**

We provide first aid equipment and trained personnel. The location of the kit(s) and the identities of trained first aider(s) are included in induction training and communicated to participants. We record accidents in an accident book.

### **Fire safety**

Fire risks in the Bunkhouse are identified through a fire risk assessment. Detection and alarm systems are maintained and tested. Escape routes are signed and lit and they are inspected on a regular basis. Information and relevant training on emergency actions is provided to employees.

### **Potentially hazardous substances**

We avoid the use of potentially hazardous substances wherever possible. Decisions about how to control unavoidable risks are made by risk assessment. Training is provided when required.

### **Work plant and equipment**

We consider the safety of employees when selecting new plant and equipment. We maintain and periodically inspect our plant and equipment following the manufacturer's requirements, or we check that others have done this on our behalf. We provide information and training to employees on how to use potentially hazardous plant and equipment.

### **Management of contractors**

When we employ contractors we ensure that they have the competence to complete the work we require from them. This includes any person or organisation that is contracted to

provide services on our behalf. We ask them to confirm how they will manage risks and periodically monitor them.

### **Risk Assessments**

If the method for controlling a risk is not clear and obvious, we carry out a risk assessment. Assessments are reviewed on a regular basis or whenever there is a relevant change to our workplace or working practices.

### **Information for employees**

Where required, we provide information to employees, volunteers and contractors on how to work safely. This includes details about fire safety, first aid provisions and accident reporting.

### **Training**

Where necessary, we provide training and instruction to employees and volunteers to enable them work safely. This can include manual handling, lone working and fire evacuations.

### **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Where necessary, we issue employees and volunteers with PPE. However we only do this as a last resort if the risk cannot be controlled in any other way. The only exception to using PPE as a last resort is when we use face coverings for Covid risks.

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### **Employee confirmation**

Once you have received and read our health and safety policy, please sign the confirmation below. If you don't understand any part of the policy then please raise the issue with the Director before signing.

I have read and understood the Great Escape health and safety policy.

I will use or follow the general provisions that have been provided by client name in relation to this policy. I confirm that I will report any shortfall in health safety or any issue that does not comply with this policy to my manager.

Signed	
Print name	
Position	
Date	

Please cut off this section and return it to the Director.