

Adventure Dolphin

and

Pangbourne Paddlesport Club

Standard Operating Procedures

Audience: All Paddlers, Coaches and Leaders taking part in water based activities

Scope: This guide is part of the overall health and safety management of the Adventure Dolphin Charity and the Pangbourne Paddlesport Club. It supplements the guidance provided by British Canoeing. This SOP details competencies, standards and expectations of all water based activities. This document includes additional local river guidance.

This is a live document and will be updated annually at the start of each year for the following season. **Parts in bold type are mandatory.**

Safeguarding

All active leaders and coaches are expected to:-

- Attended a session with our Welfare Officer or other delegated person, to discuss awareness, protecting yourself, minimum standards and reporting procedures and knowledge of where the forms are to be found etc. This is usually achieved at an induction session.
- **Attend a Safeguarding course and to complete an update every three years.**
- **Have completed a DBS within the club or are able to evidence their own DBS check, or complete the safeguarding self-disclosure form.**
- **Agree and sign a “Coaches Code of Conduct” form, as part of the Coach/Leader/member induction process.**
- **Know where to find the clubs Equity and Equality . Health and safety statements.**
- **Abide by the recommendations of the club with regard to respectful use of social media.**

Normal Operations for Water Activities

Club Standard Areas of Operation

The Club divides the river into several sections. A session leader who wishes to deliver in that area should feel competent to lead in the area identified and should hold suitable qualifications for the environment in which they are working.

If a leader is asked to deliver in an area by the co-ordinator for a session, it is accepted that the leader has the ability to make decisions as to their group being able to work safely in that area.

Coaches should take into consideration known hazards in the area and be familiar with the generic paddling risk assessment.

Coaches should be aware of other river users, local hazards in the area of operation, weather and flows.

In the sections below we use the Environmental Definitions described by British Canoeing. Please refer to: -

<https://www.britishcanoeingawarding.org.uk/guidance-documents/>

Be aware that all our operating areas are highly influenced by weather and water conditions. Adverse conditions may change a very sheltered area to a higher level of risk within the time of the planned session.

Landing Stage up to Whitchurch Bridge and down stream to the No Mooring signpost.

This should be considered in line with British Canoeing's definition of Very Sheltered Water, in summer conditions with no significant flow.

If a green flow exists it should be defined as Sheltered Water. Note that the flow usually affects the side of the river closest to the landing stage.

Usual access is from the landing stage or slipway further downstream. Use of grass banks should be reserved for training purposes, such as how to launch from a high bank.

Lock Cut and Whitchurch Mill Pond

This should be considered in line with British Canoeing's definition of Very Sheltered Water.

Care must be taken crossing to the entrance of the lock cut. If there is significant flow, you should cross the river below the bridge stanchions. There is an area of shallow water under the bridge on the far bank.

The lock cut is considered very sheltered water and avoids river flow. Caution must be exercised whenever there may be river traffic entering or leaving the lock. To allow boats to pass or access the landing stage, it is better to move your group to the opposite side (to the right when facing the lock).

The Mill Pond can have a flow of water making it difficult for novices. **Avoid noisy activities to help maintain good neighbour relations with the Mill owners.** Please be aware that there is often a heavy growth of weed and a soft muddy river bed. There is also slipway in Mill Pond which can act as an escape route. **Respect the land surrounding the Mill Pond it is private and no access is allowed.**

In early summer nesting areas need to be avoided. These are often found in the bushes in the Mill Pond and at the entrance to the lock cut.

[The Bridge arch adjacent to the Meadow and Upstream of the Bridge to the top of the Islands near the weir.](#)

This should be considered as sheltered water.

In summer conditions with no flow this area is suitable for groups, but care is needed with moored boats and overhanging trees and the bridge stanchions. Access is also available at the slipway between the surgery and the River Pang. There is shallow water at the mouth of the River Pang.

In significant flow, this is considered to be Moderate water. This is out of bounds to all paddlers unless under the leadership of a coach with moderate water qualifications, or the group has paddling competence for this environment.

Coaches/leaders may venture into the weir pool in low water conditions, great care should be exercised if any of the weir gates are open. This area is out of bounds when the River is on Red or Amber Boards or if the large radial weir gates are open.

[River Adjacent to the Meadow – Pangbourne Straight](#)

This should be considered in line with British Canoeing's definition of Very Sheltered Water, in summer conditions with no significant flow or wind. But, if a green flow exists it should be defined as Sheltered Water or Moderate Water in RED board conditions.

Coaches/Leaders/ paddlers, are familiar with access points and be aware of hazards (overhanging trees, moving and moored boats, anglers and the wind conditions).

[Below Pangbourne Meadow to Mapledurham Lock](#)

This should be considered in line with British Canoeing's definition of Sheltered Water in summer conditions. But in winter conditions, when the river is on Amber or Red Boards or the river is affected by strong winds, should be considered as Moderate Water.

The section below the meadow is more remote from the Centre Building with limited exit and access points, it is much more open to the wind and waves. It is at least a 20 min paddle back to the Centre in good conditions from the Oratory School Boat Club (which is a mile from the Landing stage and half way to Mapledurham).

Coaches, Leaders and paddlers must consider the size of the group and the range of it's ability, along with environmental conditions at the time. Appropriate kit should be worn and spares carried as considered necessary.

Ideally, all will have some first aid training and an appropriate first aid kit should be carried in the group along with a mobile phone.

The Thames above Whitchurch Lock and The Thames below

Mapeldurham Lock

This should be considered in line with British Canoeing's definition of Sheltered Water in summer conditions. But in winter conditions, when the river is on Amber or Red Boards or the river is affected by wind, should be considered as Moderate Water.

Coaches, Leaders and paddlers must consider the size of the group and the range of it's ability, along with environmental conditions at the time.

The distance away from and not so easy access to the centre has to be considered. Coaches, Leaders and paddlers should consider the size of the group and the range of it's ability, along with environmental conditions at the time. Appropriate kit should be worn and spares carried as considered necessary.

Ideally all should have some first aid training and an appropriate first aid kit and at least one mobile phone must be carried in the group.

The kit required by marathon and sprint paddlers should be discussed with the session leader. At a minimum this will include a mobile phone and the number of the session leader and an ETA agreed prior to departure. All members of the paddling group should be encouraged to carry a suitable emergency kit.

The Kennet and Avon Canal

It is recognised that in strong flow or high water conditions on the Thames groups may wish to move the session to the canal at Aldermaston.

Here the canal is considered Very Sheltered Water from Aldermaston Wharf upstream for one mile staying in the Lock Cut or downstream to Ufton Swing Bridge.

The canal outside of these areas is considered to be Sheltered Water in Summer conditions, and Moderate Water in Winter conditions.

As Coaches, Leaders and paddlers are working away from the centre for the session, an emergency contact must be agreed and a register must be taken, along with knowledge of the emergency contacts for all paddlers attending the session.

Coaches, Leaders and paddlers must consider the size of the group and the range of it's ability, along with environmental conditions at the time. Appropriate kit should be worn and spares carried as considered necessary.

Ideally all should have some first aid training and an appropriate first aid kit and at least one mobile phone must be carried in the group.

It is important that Coaches, Leaders and paddlers ensure that safeguarding guidance is observed by all: i.e. no lone working and all juniors are transported and collected from the venue by their parents/guardians.

Outside Normal Areas of Operation

If a Coach, Leader or Paddler wishes to run a club trip out of these areas then a Trip Planning form must be submitted to the Trip Committee for consideration and the trip should have been approved by them.

Coaches, Leaders and Paddlers will need to have reviewed the general paddling activities Risk Assessment and to consider any specific safety requirements for their trip. If possible carried out a

recce in similar conditions to the trip being planned, or advice sort of local paddlers/ clubs who regularly use the area identifying any hazards, egress and access points.

General Advice For River Coaches, Leaders and Paddlers

Rules of the River (stay right) should be observed. Generally pass oncoming river traffic by steering right. If passing close to other boats make your alteration of course obvious, to save any confusion.

Know how to give clear and simple instructions and the importance of briefing a group before activity starts.

Know how to set boundaries and the principles of leading a group .

Understand the importance of being back on time

Ensure the Session Leader/Co-ordinator knows where you plan to go and approves it.

Know where to find support and how to access it.

Incident Management

Leaders, Coaches and Paddlers must know how to manage an incident and know how to report it (use the Incident Report Form).

Please refer to “Emergency Action Plan Document”

Personal Skill and Fitness

Coaches, leaders and paddlers must consider their current personal skill and fitness levels, when choosing the area of operation.

Equipment

All members should look after and respect club equipment, the building and facilities. **Any equipment found damaged or broken should be taken out of use and boats placed in the compound with a “do not use notice attached”, other equipment to be place in quarantine, a damage report completed.**

Use of Buoyancy Aids

Our normal procedure is to wear buoyancy aids for all water activities.

The exception to this rule is specific to Pangbourne Paddlesport Club racing section and subject to supervision by the session co-ordinators.

Revised KD 24/11/22

The following exceptions -

- Marathon paddlers ranked in Division 6 or above, in summer conditions (1st April – 31st October) when the River is not on Amber or Red Boards (Note paddlers U.18 must provide written parental approval for this).
- If using a crew boat with a lower ranked paddler (Division 7-10) a buoyancy aid must be worn by the whole crew.

Helmets

Helmets may be required for specific activities where a risk assessment suggests this would be appropriate.

Manual Handling

All paddlers should be encouraged to use safe lifting methods. Leaders and coaches should introduce safe manual handling practice to their groups. Where coaches observe incorrect methods being used they should intervene and show the correct technique(s) or report to their co-ordinator.

Good Practice for Session management

In order to give a quality and enjoyable experience to our participants, it has been agreed that our sessions should include:-

- An initial welcome should be provided and participants given information about the lay out of the building.
- If working away from the Centre, meeting point and timings have been communicated to participants.
- **A register must be completed at each session.**
- **Medical forms should be reviewed by the coach/leader. Coaches and Leaders should be aware that participants may have personal health needs.** Try to check if there are any fitness issues for participation and also whether participants are carrying essential items (for instance, Rescue Inhalers, Glucose tablets, GTN spray).
Leaders should check medical consent forms for any new participants/group.
- **Meet and greet group at beginning of session and provide a “session brief”.**
- Any helpers should be briefed as to what they are expected to do.
- The Coach/ Leader should ask their group about experiences and expectations.
- **A warm up activity should be included, and the activity area clearly defined.**
- **A pre launch briefing should be given.**
- Then coach/ Leader delivers session.
- It is normal practice for the senior leader to identify suitably competent individuals to help lead other competent paddlers within a group during a session.
- A session leader may also identify suitably competent individuals to paddle independently of a group during a training session.
- At end of session (possible by water) summarise what has been done.

- Get feedback from participants.
- **Coaches/ Leaders should try to inform participants about membership, temporary membership, trips, future assessments and social events.**
- **Return and clean and secure all equipment.**
- If the session is part of an ongoing course a record of progress should be completed after each session. This can be in the form of a course checklist. This allows another coach, who may be covering, to provide a suitable session for the groups needs.
- **Report any incidents or near miss events.**
- **Co-ordinator should brief their team of any notices (from Operations/ trips/ charity/ BC) at start or end of session.**
- **Co-ordinators should complete a session report.**
- **Coordinators should report equipment and building issues to the Facilities Group.**

Data Retention and Social Media

All members should be sensitive to the issues of the General Data Protection regulations and the use of social media restrictions. We. are able to access Members qualifications through the British Canoeing digital Club House