

# DERWENT HILL

## Health and Safety Policy

### General Statement

Derwent Hill is committed to achieving a positive and effective health and safety culture. This document sets out our policy for protecting the health and safety of employees, course participants and other guests, visitors, contractors and others who may be affected by the way we conduct our activities and services. We are particularly committed to safeguarding the children and young people who stay at Derwent Hill and take part in activities.

In order to achieve this, Derwent Hill works within Sunderland City Council's Health and Safety Policy and Codes of Practice.

Derwent Hill staff, Visit Leaders and participants recognise and understand that there is an inherent level of residual risk involved in adventure activities. The participants gain great benefit from them and learn to understand and manage risk and uncertainty for themselves. We recognise that it is impossible to eliminate all risks without also removing these benefits. We therefore aim to reduce risks to a tolerable level through effective risk assessment and risk management and also identify the potential benefits, through a process of risk-benefit analysis. This approach is endorsed by the Health & Safety Executive through their "Principles of Sensible Risk Management". There is an understanding that risk assessment is independent of the consideration of benefits and that it is not justifiable to use benefits as a factor to increase the level of risk beyond what is reasonably tolerable.

We seek to create a culture of trust, support and openness, where employees and others feel confident to reflect upon their own practice and understand their own limitations, give and receive feedback and continually learn.

### Organisation and Management Arrangements

The Centre Director has overall responsibility for Health and Safety, including:

- Leading the establishment of a positive and effective health and safety culture.
- Ensuring that policies and operating guidelines are in place and communicated to staff.
- Ensuring that responsibility for specific areas is properly delegated.
- Monitoring compliance.
- Incident reporting.

### Senior Management Team

The Senior Management Team has Health and Safety as a standing item on its monthly agenda. Individual managers have delegated responsibilities and are responsible for ensuring that resources are available for managing health and safety in their areas:

- The Venue Manager is responsible for ensuring safe practice by the Venue Team, and for the safety of buildings and gardens, including compliance with policies and guidelines regarding lifting equipment and working at heights (except for outdoor activities), fire, asbestos, Legionella, food hygiene, COSHH, gas & boilers, electricity, traffic management, trees, tools and machinery.

- The Operations Manager is responsible for ensuring safe practice by the Tutor Team, including contract associate tutors, and for the safety of all activity equipment and facilities, including vehicles and boats.
- The Business Manager is responsible for ensuring safe practice by the Business Support Team, and for the safety of office equipment.
- Line managers are responsible for ensuring that the employees who report to them are properly trained and informed, and that they comply with health and safety requirements.
- Duty Managers are responsible for monitoring plans for activities, through the daily morning tutor meeting and ensuring these plans are appropriate with reference to the weather forecast.

### **Employees and Contractors**

All employees are responsible for:

- taking care of their own health and safety, and that of the people with whom they work.
- co-operating with colleagues and managers to ensure a positive and effective health and safety culture.
- complying with relevant policies, codes of practice, health and safety requirements, operating guidelines and risk assessments.
- reporting any health and safety incidents or concerns.

### **Resident Site Supervisor**

The Resident Site Supervisor is responsible for regular inspection and maintenance of vehicles, buildings and the site.

### **Reporting**

A system is in place for reporting accidents, incidents and near-misses. Reports are circulated to all managers for action and information.

### **Risk Assessments & Operating Guidelines**

- Risk Assessments are recorded for all activities where significant risks have been identified. Control measures identified from risk assessments are incorporated in Operating Guidelines for activities and the Venue.

### **Monitoring**

- An annual monitoring check is carried out of all Health & Safety records.

### **Staff Communication**

- Whenever changes are made to risk assessments or operating guidelines, a Safety Update is published and circulated to relevant staff.
- A full staff meeting is held weekly, at which any health and safety notices are made.
- On every morning a course which includes activities, a tutor meeting is held at which the plans for the day are reviewed in the light of the weather and prevailing conditions. These meetings are attended by the Duty Manager.

### **Adventure activities**

- Derwent Hill holds an AALA licence and Adventuremark. These involve regular inspections and provide external verification of safety standards.

- Derwent Hill uses adventure activities in the 'great outdoors', where conditions constantly vary. Derwent Hill therefore employs experienced and competent staff, who work within the Activity Operating Guidelines, are able to carry out dynamic risk assessments in the field. Staff are free to make decisions to change or curtail activities if necessary, based upon their own professional judgement.
- All staff leading adventure activities must be specifically approved to do so. Approval is based upon a qualifications matrix which refers to national Governing Body qualifications. Derwent Hill maintains a database of such approvals and of staff qualifications.

**Customer feedback**

Clients are routinely asked for their feedback about standards of health and safety, in end-of-course evaluation forms.