



GAISCE  
THE PRESIDENT'S  
AWARD

## Adventure Journey Policy





**Our mission is to provide opportunities for young people to realise their potential through personal challenges, facilitating the transition from young person to young adult and enhancing their potential and contribution as active participants in society.**

*Note: At time of writing, the President's Award Leader is responsible for supervising the Adventure Journey.*

*Gaisce are in the process of developing training specific to the role of an Adventure Journey Supervisor and supervision of the Adventure Journey.*

*PALs will be among the first to be invited to attend this training on a voluntary basis and become Adventure Journey Supervisors. This training will also be open to others who are not PALs but would like to volunteer to oversee the Adventure Journey.*

*Throughout this policy document where the term Adventure Journey Supervisor (AJS) is used, it refers to someone who has attended the Adventure Journey Supervisor training and has met the criteria to be set by Gaisce as an Adventure Journey Supervisor*

*Please note that all requirements and responsibilities ascribed to the Adventure Journey Supervisor in this policy must currently be carried out by the President Award Leader.*

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## Introduction

### Policy Statement

The Adventure Journey is one part of the Gaisce Award programme at all levels. The aim of the Adventure Journey is to inspire young people to develop a spirit of adventure and discovery by planning, training for, and completing an outdoor Adventure Journey as part of a team.

The Adventure Journey is often the part of the Award programme that attracts the most initial attention and provides highly memorable experiences for all involved.

This policy statement sets out the requirements for planning and participating in the Gaisce Award Adventure Journey and the necessary procedures that must be followed by all involved in order to successfully complete this section of the Award.

The Adventure Journey by its nature contains an element of risk and it is important that this risk is properly managed to reduce the likelihood of an accident occurring, and to decrease the consequences if an accident does occur.

This policy aims to minimise risk by promoting safe procedures for participants taking part in the Adventure Journey section and other outdoor adventure activities associated with the Adventure Journey.

President's Award Leaders must ensure that this Adventure Journey Policy is followed by all participants and accompanying adults so that all activities undertaken in relation to the Adventure Journey are conducted with the highest regard for the safety of all involved. If any issues arise during the implementation of this policy, please contact the Gaisce office by phone (01 617 1999) or email (mail@gaisce.ie).

### Types of Adventure Journey

All Adventure Journeys must have a clearly stated purpose which can be developed and modified during planning, preparation, and training and practice as participants develop a connection with the journey they will undertake and to the area in which they will travel.

An Adventure Journey may take the form of an Expedition or an Exploration. The difference between an Expedition and an Exploration is one of emphasis or degree although both require a purpose and journey.

An Expedition is a journey with a purpose. In an Expedition, the primary focus is on the journeying. More time is devoted to this with less effort put into research and gathering information.

An Exploration is a purpose with a journey. In an Exploration, the primary focus is to observe and collect information relevant to the purpose. More time and effort is spent on this, and consequently less time is devoted to getting from one place to another. The journeying aspect remains significant, however, with a minimum of one third of the activity hours being spent on journeying.

## Adventure Journey Requirements

1. The journey, with an agreed purpose, should be undertaken ideally in a small team of between four and ten people.
2. All the team members should be involved in the planning and preparation. Not all participants on the journey need to be pursuing the Gaisce Award programme, but the team should operate as peers / equals making decisions together.
3. The participants must stay in a self-catering hostel, camping, or in another suitable pre-approved form of accommodation. They must cook at least one substantial meal per day.
4. The journey can take place on land or water. Participants can travel by their own physical efforts (foot, cycle, canoe, etc.), by animal (horse, camel, etc.) or by other non-motorised assistance (sail, etc.).
5. Participants must source and transport all gear and equipment that they will require with them on the journey, within reason.
6. The environment chosen should be challenging but within the capabilities of the team
7. The days on the Adventure Journey ideally should be consecutive, i.e. going from point A to point B, however at Bronze level looped walks are acceptable. Participants should spend the entire specified period of time exclusively on the adventure journey.
8. All Adventure Journeys should be supervised and evaluated by the Adventure Journey Supervisor or the President's Award Leader (PAL) where the participants are under the age of 18 and/or are vulnerable adults.
9. On completion, participants should present a report to their PAL as part of the evaluation process. This report can be written, photographic, verbal, a video diary, or by other imaginative means.

## Time and Distance Requirements

The distance covered will depend on the speed and capabilities of the group, which should be established during practice and should then inform the planning of the Journey. The minimum requirements are set out below:

**Bronze Award:** Two days and one night

- Walking distance: A minimum of 25km
- Cycling distance: A minimum of 100km
- Canoeing distance: A minimum of 20km

Must be completed over two consecutive days and involve at least 12 hours of purposeful effort.

**Silver Award:** Three days and two nights

- Walking distance: A minimum of 50km
- Cycling distance: A minimum of 190km
- Canoeing distance: A minimum of 40km

Must be completed over three consecutive days and involve at least 21 hours of purposeful effort.

**Gold Award:** Four days and three nights

- Walking distance: A minimum of 80km

- Cycling distance: A minimum of 300km
- Canoeing distance: A minimum of 60km

Must be completed over four consecutive days and involve at least 32 hours of purposeful effort.

For cycling and canoeing journeys, we recommend consulting the relevant National Governing Body for further information on best practice approaches and guidelines. Purposeful effort refers to time spent towards accomplishing the specific purpose of the Expedition or Exploration and journeying. Time associated with sleeping, cooking and eating is in addition to this time. For an Expedition the purpose will be mainly associated with the journey so most or all of the hours of purposeful effort will be spent journeying. For an exploration a minimum of one third of the hours of purposeful effort must be spent journeying.

## Supervision

*Note: At time of writing, the President's Award Leader is responsible for supervising the Adventure Journey.*

*Gaisce are in the process of developing training specific to the role of an Adventure Journey Supervisor and supervision of the Adventure Journey.*

*PALs will be among the first to be invited to attend this training on a voluntary basis and become Adventure Journey Supervisors. This training will also be open to others who are not PALs but who would like to volunteer to oversee the Adventure Journey.*

*Until that time, it is essential that PALs are available to accompany the Adventure Journey where participants are under the age of 18 years and or are vulnerable adults. In circumstances where the participants are over 18, the PAL should still agree the Adventure Journey with participants beforehand. Where a PAL is not in a position to undertake the Adventure Journey (in full or in part), they must ensure that adequate supervision is in place. Adequate supervision refers to a member(s) of staff from the operating body who has been Garda-vetted and refereed, and where has possible has relevant training or experience.*

*Throughout this policy document where the term Adventure Journey Supervisor (AJS) is used, it refers to someone who has attended the Adventure Journey Supervisor training and has met any other criteria set by Gaisce to be recognised as an Adventure Journey Supervisor*

***Please note that all requirements and responsibilities ascribed to the Adventure Journey Supervisor in this policy must currently be carried out by the President Award Leader.***

## Adventure Journey Supervisor

All Adventure Journeys must be supervised by a President Award Leader (PAL) / Adventure Journey Supervisor (AJS) where the participants are under the age of 18 or are vulnerable adults. Where the participants are over the age of 18, the PAL/AJS must agree the Adventure Journey before hand.

The PAL / AJS is responsible for the safety of all participants while preparing for and participating in the Adventure Journey.

The PAL / AJS must:

- Have received the relevant Gaisce training for their role
- Have undergone Garda Vetting either by Gaisce or the operating body or organisation they are working for or volunteering with.
- Be recorded as a current AJS/PAL on Gaisce's database

The role of the PAL / AJS is to ensure the safety of participants and to be satisfied that the Adventure Journey complies with the requirements and guidelines set out in this document. They will ensure that the requirements are met in practice during all stages of the journey: planning & preparation, training, practice, the journey itself, and the report & assessment.



When someone who is not a PAL is undertaking the AJS role, they must meet the requirements which are set out in either the 'Additional Accompanying Adults section' (page 5) or the 'Third Party Assistance' section (page 6) of this policy, especially with regards to vetting and insurance.

## Supervision Ratios

Every Adventure Journey must be accompanied by a minimum of two adults.

The supervision ratios for the Adventure Journey and preparatory trips are one adult to every eight participants to ensure adequate supervision, particularly in the event of an accident or incident.

The number of supervisors may need to be varied to take account of the gender of participants, the gender of the accompanying adults, the type of activity being undertaken, and the ability of the participants.

At all levels of the Award programme an overnight stay is required and there are specific requirements that need to be met in this regard:

- The PAL is required to oversee participants during the overnight stay, where the participants are under the age of 18 and or are vulnerable adults.
- Males and females should have separate sleeping quarters and be appropriately supervised
- Those under 18 years of age should have separate sleeping quarters to those over 18.
- Under 18s should ideally be supervised by two adults of the same gender as themselves.
- The overnight element should be explicitly covered on the Code of Behaviour which is agreed with all participants before the Journey.

If the group undertaking the Adventure Journey is split into smaller independent subgroups/teams, each subgroup/team must comply with the above supervision ratios.

## Additional Accompanying Adults

Most PALs / AJSs work or volunteer within established organisations that support youth members of that organisation in their pursuit of the Gaisce Award. Such an organisation is considered by Gaisce to be an Operating Body because it permits and enables the operation of the Award programme for its members.

The PAL may decide to involve additional adults due to factors such as:

- Large numbers, age, experience or capability of the participants,
- Combined experience or expertise of the accompanying adult,
- Nature of the specific environment in which the activity is to be conducted,
- Weather and other prevailing conditions,
- Other reasons particular to the group or the proposed journey.

Such additional adults must be staff or volunteers with the Operating Body and must operate in compliance with the Operating Body's relevant policies and procedures, including their Child Protection Policy. It is expected that this will require them to be Garda-vetted via the Operating Body and to be covered by an appropriate insurance policy, incorporating adequate public liability cover and also possibly personal injury cover.

It is the responsibility of the PAL / AJS to ensure that all adults accompanying the Adventure Journey who are not PALs / AJSs are advised of the criteria of the Adventure Journey as well as the contents of this policy, the Safety Statement, and the Child Protection Policy.

## Third Party Assistance

Adventure Journeys are often undertaken with the support or assistance of a third party: a party that is neither the organisation through which the young person is pursuing the Gaisce Award; nor Gaisce itself.

Third parties may be community / youth organisations (for example Scouting Ireland) or a private organisation (such as an adventure centre or other provider of adventure activities). However Gaisce does not endorse or promote any private third-party organisation, regardless of whether they fulfil the requirements of the Gaisce Adventure Journey section.

If a commercial provider uses the Gaisce logo to advertise their services, they are in breach of Gaisce's copyright and intellectual property rights and will be asked to remove it.

Where third parties are engaged to assist in an Adventure Journey, a PAL must still be present for at least the overnight supervision, and ideally for the full duration of the Adventure Journey.

Gaisce participants must undertake their Adventure Journey with the group or Operating Body through which they applied for the Award. Gaisce cannot accept Award completions from individuals who take part in Adventure Journeys with groups outside of their Operating Body without the explicit permission given to the PAL by Gaisce beforehand and in exceptional circumstances.

If third party providers are not adopting Gaisce's Child Protection Policy and Safety Statement, they must have in place their own:

- Child Protection Policy, in line with the Irish Sport's Council's Code of Ethics and Good Practice and incorporating protection policies for under 18s and vulnerable adults,
- Safety Statement, incorporating risk management and incident reporting.

All third party providers should have appropriate level of insurance to carry out and oversee the activities they will be involved with.

It is the responsibility of the PAL / AJS to ensure that third party providers:

- Are familiar with and will comply with an appropriate Child Protection Policy as set out above,
- Have undergone Garda vetting through their own organisation, the Operating Body, or Gaisce,
- Have appropriate insurance cover in place to cover their involvement.

## Specialist Skills and Training

Where the chosen mode of travel, or any activity to be undertaken on the Adventure Journey, would normally require an adult overseeing it to be specifically trained or qualified, the PAL / AJS must ensure that a suitably trained / qualified person is involved in the team overseeing the Adventure Journey and any practice journeys.

If the PAL / AJS does not have the required training or qualifications to overseeing these activities, they should contact the National Governing Body (NGB) of the relevant activity to ascertain the required level of proficiency to undertake the proposed Adventure Journey and source an AJS with the required skills to supervise accordingly.

## Safety

### Safety Requirements

1. Safety is paramount when it comes to the Adventure Journey. It is essential that the PAL / AJS supports participants to perform a risk assessment and ensures that all participants and accompanying adults are familiar with that risk assessment in preparing for the Adventure Journey.
2. Each participant's parent or guardian must be provided with adequate information on the Adventure Journey and preparation as well as the outcomes of the risk assessment. Each participant's parent/guardian must provide informed consent for their participation in the Adventure Journey and all preparatory activities. This should be obtained in writing for all participants who are under the age of 18.
3. The PAL / AJS should obtain medical information concerning each participant which might be relevant (such as medications, allergies, inhalers, phobias, etc) and the PAL / AJS should ensure appropriate contingencies are in place prior to departure.
4. Either the PAL or one of the accompanying adults / third party providers should hold a current certificate in outdoor first-aid relevant to the mode of travel and they should bring an appropriately stocked first aid kit with them during practice and on the journey.
5. Participants need to have the appropriate skills to undertake the journey safely and the PAL / AJS must ensure that they undergo relevant training and undertake sufficient practice so that they have the ability to be self-reliant and safe in their chosen environment.
6. Planning for the Adventure Journey and preparatory activities should take account of any adventure activity standards and safety guidelines relevant to the mode of travel and to any activities which the participants plan to undertake during training, practice or on the Journey.

### Safety Procedures

1. Where the Adventure Journey or elements of it, require special equipment, such equipment must be available. The PAL / AJS must ensure that it is fit for purpose, serviceable, and it must comply with any relevant standards.
2. All participants must dress suitably for the activity. Jewellery and other ornaments must be removed when they are deemed a threat to safety. Long hair should be secured if it is likely to impair vision, impede performance, or pose a threat to safety.
3. A map of the planned route, including any emergency options, should be left with a designated person ("Named Contact") before participants embark on the Adventure Journey. The Named Contact should be provided with contact details for the parent / guardian of all participants on the Adventure Journey. They also take responsibility to look after communications with parents / guardians and other relevant parties for the full

duration of the journey, in particular they will act as a focal point for communications in the event of an accident / incident. The Named Contact must be available and must remain in a fit state to undertake their responsibilities for the full duration of the Adventure Journey.

4. The PAL / AJS is responsible for ensuring that participants have an emergency plan in addition to their map, to deal with situations such as very bad weather, illness, or injury. The plan should contain a brief description of what the group will do in an emergency on each stage of the journey. The information should also contain the telephone numbers of accommodation in which the group is staying and / or any mobile phone numbers which will be used to contact the PAL / AJS and the group during the journey.
5. The PAL / AJS should carry a mobile phone with a fully charged battery for use in case of emergencies and ensure that at least one designated person in the Adventure Journey group also has access to a phone. Arrangements should be made to ensure phones can be kept charged and that they do not run out of credit. Where mobile phone coverage is not reliable along the entirety of the planned route, arrangements must be made to enable the PAL / AJS and / or Named Contact to make and receive phone calls and messages at least once per day during the Adventure Journey.

## Risk Assessment

The Adventure Journey by its nature contains an element of risk. It is important that any risk is properly considered, assessed, and managed to reduce the likelihood of an accident or emergency occurring and to limit the consequences if an accident or emergency does occur.

For every Adventure Journey, the PAL / AJS must complete a risk assessment. A risk assessment is a careful examination of what could cause harm to participants during the course of the activity and a plan of practical risk control measures that the PAL / AJS will put in place to minimise (reduce to an acceptable level) the risk of harm occurring.

The Adventure Journey checklist contains a template for recording this information. This should be considered as a starting point, and the PAL / AJS should ensure that the participants review this during planning, preparation, and training and practice to enable them to develop it into a complete risk assessment for their particular journey.

A risk assessment is particularly important when the group are taking part in activities which present a heightened level of danger such as mountaineering, remote hillwalking, climbing, or water activities involving sail or power.

## Local Knowledge

Local knowledge of the area where the journey will take place is vital to ensure a safe plan for the Adventure Journey.

The PAL / AJS should help the participants to source local information by one or more of the following:

- Reputable publications and websites;
- Recreational practitioners who have used the area recently;
- Landowners in the area;

- Other groups or clubs who have used the area recently.

Relevant local information might include the following:

- Availability of suitable stopping points and campsites;
- Availability of drinking water along the route and at campsites;
- Entry and exit points to the hill / open country / track / water;
- Current restrictions such as permission to camp, use a fire, or land / berth watercraft;
- New route options such as tracks, trails, or water courses;
- Areas under restoration such as revegetation or removal of invasive species;
- Hazard reduction work such as removal of excess vegetation or path / bank improvement;
- Temporary deviations to tracks, roads, waterways;
- Specific hazards on the route at the time of year when the Adventure Journey will take place;
- Discrepancies between the route and the topographical map depicting it.

A reconnaissance trip is a useful and advisable means of gathering and verifying relevant local information. Reconnaissance trips do not have to cover the entire route of a proposed journey but should be designed so as to obtain maximum relevant information. If the AJS / PAL is not in a position to undertake such a trip it is advisable to locate someone who has journeyed in the area recently and to ask them about it.

## The Adventure Journey

### Planning & Preparation

Proper planning, preparation, and training are vital so that participants are well prepared to enjoy and complete their Adventure Journey safely.

Planning should be done by the participants, while supported and guided by the PAL / AJS. There will be much to decide, including: who will be participating; the size of the group and any sub-groups; the purpose of the Journey – whether it will be an Expedition or an Exploration; how participants will travel, based upon the environment they will travel through and the route they will follow; the gear they will bring and what they will eat; what emergency procedures they will use; what training and practice they should have; and so on.

The PAL / AJS and participants should agree a code of behaviour in advance of the Adventure Journey, including respecting others, working together, making and keeping commitments, and use of social media and mobile phones in addition to the use of digital media arising from the trip. The purpose of this agreed code of behaviour is to ensure safety and appropriate behaviour. The code of behaviour should also set out what will happen in the event of a participant not adhering to the code.

Any and all of the equipment required will have to be sourced, and participants will have to be familiar with the required personal gear and group equipment and how it is used. Accommodation will need be arranged: hostels booked and / or tents organised. Transport will need to be organised to get the participants to the start point and to collect them at the end point. Arrangements should also be made to allow for the evacuation of individual participants or the full group should the need arise.

PALs / AJSs will need to ensure that participants are fit enough to participate in the full journey and that they have the knowledge and skills required to play an active role in the group throughout the journey. The group will need to practice working as a team (or teams) utilising the equipment and travelling in a similar environment to that which they will encounter on their Adventure Journey.

The PAL / AJS should support participants to use the Adventure Journey checklist to ensure that all the essential items and elements are addressed in planning and preparation.

The PAL / AJS should ensure that adequate insurance is obtained to cover all aspects of the Adventure Journey and preparatory activities.

### Training

Training may be required to enable participants to safely undertake their journey.

Participants should be able to demonstrate the following competencies prior to the journey:

1. Understanding of the Adventure Journey,

2. First Aid and emergency procedures relevant to the type of journey and the environment in which they are undertaking their Adventure Journey,
3. Safety and safe practice relevant to the type of journey and the environment in which they are undertaking their Adventure Journey,
4. Route planning and navigation relevant to the type of journey and the environment in which they are undertaking their Adventure Journey,
5. Camp craft / accommodation,
6. Teamwork and leadership within the group,
7. Preparation of food and cooking,
8. Environmental awareness and care,
9. Necessary equipment and how to use it,
10. Technical skills on the mode of travel,
11. Observation and recording skills.

The level to which the topics are covered:

- Is a matter for the sound judgement of the PAL/AJS and must be based on the type and difficulty of the journey.
- Will depend on the experience, condition, characteristics and competence of participants.
- Will depend on the duration of the journey and the time of year.

If an Adventure Journey involves undertaking an activity that requires specialist skills, the training in those skills must be undertaken by the participants, before the journey.

At all levels of the Award programme:

- At least one third of participants should hold a current certificate in outdoor first aid relevant to the mode of travel
- At least one third of the group should be trained in navigation skills appropriate to the environment and route chosen for the journey
- Each member of the group must be trained in any specialist skills that are required to complete the journey

Any and all specialist or technical training identified or required should be carried out to a standard approved by the relevant National Governing Body and by persons properly qualified to deliver such training.

## **Practice Journey(s)**

The PAL / AJS should consider undertaking at least one practice journey with the group. The aim is to provide participants with sufficient experience to enable them to plan and undertake their Adventure Journey safely and with confidence.

Even a highly skilled group of individuals should take part in at least one practice journey together to become familiar with each other's ways of working and to develop as a team.

Practice journeys should be of similar nature to the Adventure Journey and in a similar environment, but not over the very same route. Participants must undertake sufficient practice journeys to ensure that they are ready to undertake the Adventure Journey together.



After training and practice, the PAL / AJS must be satisfied that the group is able to competently carry out their journey in a safe and self-reliant manner.

## The Adventure Journey

When all of the planning, preparation, training and practice is complete the participants are ready to undertake their Adventure Journey. The PAL / AJS must be satisfied that the arrangements that have been made are adequate for a successful trip and that risk management arrangements are appropriate.

By this point, participants should be confident that they are ready to undertake the challenge of working together as a team to complete their Adventure Journey.

Participants will undertake their planned Expedition or Exploration as set out in this policy and the PAL / AJS and any other accompanying adults will undertake their role as set out in the 'Supervision' section (page 4).

The PAL / AJS should encourage the group to hold a daily review. The best time for this is probably after the main meal when participants are fed and rested. The purpose of the review is to help participants reflect on their progress towards their agreed purpose, how they are working together, and if there are any adjustments they should consider about their approach.

The PAL / AJS role in this review is to support the process, not to lead it: the Adventure Journey experience belongs to the participants. Because the review will enable the PAL / AJS to meet with all of the participants, it will allow them to determine the morale of the group, to observe any adverse interpersonal behaviour, and to explore and manage any medical / health conditions or other concerns that may be developing.

If the PAL / AJS plans to use recorded images or sounds from the Adventure Journey, they must first get permission from the participants or their parents/guardians by way of a media release form. A copy of the media release form is available for download on Gaisce's website. Gaisce are always delighted to receive photos and stories from participants and PALs about their Adventure Journey experience.

## Report & Assessment

### Report

On completion of the Adventure Journey, participants are encouraged to present a report/evaluation to their PAL. This report can be written, photographic, verbal, a video diary, or by other imaginative means. The report may be an individual or group report.

Participants should be encouraged to think about the format and content of this report during planning and preparation, so that they can decide on their approach and start working on the content as they go.

It is preferable that the format of the report is agreed with the PAL before the Adventure Journey begins.

The report might include:

- Route and navigation details;

- Information about weather, terrain, water conditions, landmarks;
- Flora and Fauna observed on the journey;
- Places of historic, cultural or scenic importance which were visited or seen;
- Adequacy / effectiveness of equipment, clothing, food, etc.;
- Campsites / accommodation;
- Experiences regarding teamwork (morale, leadership, decision-making, etc.);
- Personal reflections on the experience (thoughts, feelings, ideas, etc.);
- Notable events;
- Incidents / challenges that arose and how the group responded to them. For example, incidents might include:
  - Route change,
  - Unexpected weather impact,
  - Equipment failure,
  - Illness or injury.

## Assessment

The participant is deemed to have completed the requirements of the Adventure Journey section of the Gaisce Award if the PAL is satisfied that:

- The participant's commitment was substantially in their own time outside of school, university or work hours.
- The participant has met the planning, preparation, training and practice requirements, and has completed their Adventure Journey meeting the requirements and guidelines set out in this document.
- Progress had been made based upon the participant's initial knowledge and ability, and the participant has strived to meet their goals and achieved the Adventure Journey purpose.
- Time and distance requirements were met, and the journey report(s) submitted to the PAL.

It may be acceptable for an individual participant or an entire Adventure Journey group not to complete the journey as planned due to weather, injury/illness or some other factor, and still achieve their Award, providing they have substantially met the requirements and guidelines set out in this document.

Participants should be assessed for their effort, their perseverance and their personal progress.

Each participant's assessment should be based on the personal contribution to and engagement with the Adventure Journey, for which reason some participants in a group might succeed in this section and others might not.

PALs should approach assessment and the communication of outcomes in a sensitive manner. The objective should be to emphasise the positive and to recognise genuine endeavour. Where a participant does not manage to satisfy the requirements of an Adventure Journey, they should be informed of the improvement areas required and supported in retrying the challenge, if they wish, after a period of further preparation.

## Updating the record

Once the assessment has been communicated with the group the PAL can sign off on the Adventure Journey in the space provided on the record sheet.

## Glossary

**Adventure Journey:** The Adventure Journey is a Section of the President's Award programme. It is an activity that involves an accepted element of risk, challenge, or adventure and requires specialist skills for its safe management.

**Adventure Journey Supervisor:** The person supervising an Adventure Journey, see Supervision section of this policy document.

**Code of Behaviour:** An agreement drawn up by participants and the PAL/Adventure Journey Supervisor. See "Planning and Preparation" section of this document.

**Code of Conduct:** This comprises a set of policies and procedures which are based on both legal requirements and best practice and constitute Gaisce's Code of Conduct for all PALs, AJSs, staff, accompanying adults and participants.

**Named Contact:** A designated person who does not participate in nor accompany the Adventure Journey, but acts as a focal point "back home" for communications between the group and relevant parties for the duration of the journey. See "Safety Procedures" section of this document.

**Informed Consent:** Means that parents/guardians give agreement to their child's participating in an activity after they have been made aware of the details of the activity including its associated risks and costs.

**Incident:** An unplanned occurrence or near miss, with the potential to cause actual harm or a significant change of plan.

**Mode of Travel:** The means by which participants travel during the Adventure Journey. See the "Adventure Journey Requirements" section of this document.

**Operating Body:** an organisation which delivers and enables the operation of the President's Award programme for its members.

**Parent / Guardian:** Refers to an adult with parental responsibilities, including carers.

**Participant:** A young person who is registered to participate in the Gaisce Award at any level, Bronze, Silver or Gold.

**President's Award Leader (PAL):** The President's Award Leader is the adult who is the mentor and contact for a participant or group of participants. The PAL is responsible for engaging young people in their chosen Award challenges, inspiring, guiding and assisting them from start through to completion. The PAL signs off on the entirety of a participants' Award at completion stage but can also sign off on individual Sections of the Award as they are completed.

**Supervision Ratio:** Refers to the Adventure Journey adult to participant ratio. The ratio may vary depending on the nature of the Journey. See the "Supervision Requirements" section of this document.

## Appendix A - Adventure Journey Checklist & Risk Assessment

This form should be completed for each Adventure Journey by each group of participants, supported by their President Award Leader(s) / Adventure Journey Supervisor

Gaisce Adventure Journey Checklist and Risk Assessment		
Adventure Journey	Organisation:	Year:
Event Date Start and End	Starts:	Ends:
Purpose of Journey	What is the specific purpose agreed by the group? Is this an Expedition or an Exploration?	
Group Size (number of participants)	Total group and number of sub-groups	
Where	Where is the start and end point of the Adventure Journey?	
Accommodation Type	Camping, hosteling, etc.	
Supervision Ratio	Number of adults to participants (cover gender balance and explain any departures from the policy)	
PAL Name	Name and contact details of the President Award Leader (PAL) responsible for the participant's progress	
Adventure Journey Supervisor	Name and contact details of the President Award Leader (PAL) responsible for safety on the journey	

Risk Area	Adventure Journey Planning	Sufficient?	Not Sufficient?	Mitigation required
<p><b>Supervision</b></p>	<p>Names and contact details for all adults including PAL/AJS who will accompany the Adventure Journey and/or attend preparatory trips.</p> <p>Are all the supervision guidelines and requirements which are listed in the Adventure Journey Policy addressed?</p> <p>Is a suitable Named Contact person appointed and are they briefed in their role?</p>			
<p><b>Third Party Providers</b></p>	<p>Are they operating an appropriate Child Protection Policy?</p> <p>Have they undergone Garda vetting through Gaisce or their own organisation?</p> <p>Have they appropriate insurance cover in place to cover their involvement?</p>			
<p><b>Health &amp; Safety</b></p>	<p>Has all health and medical information been collected and filed so that is available to all adults during the Adventure Journey and preparatory activities?</p> <p>Has Informed Consent been received for all participants?</p> <p>Have contact details and emergency numbers been collected for all Participants and adults?</p>			
<p><b>Health &amp; Safety</b></p>	<p>Do an adequate number of the adults have appropriate first aid training/certification?</p> <p>Is there adequate First Aid supplies and equipment available for the trip?</p>			

Risk Area	Adventure Journey Planning	Sufficient?	Not Sufficient?	Mitigation required
<p><b>Health &amp; Safety</b></p>	<p>Have all participants and accompanying adults been briefed concerning safety in the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chosen mode of travel?</li> <li>• Environment in which they will travel?</li> <li>• Accommodation?</li> </ul> <p>Have any relevant adventure activity standards or guidelines been identified and are they being complied with?</p>			
<p><b>Health &amp; Safety</b></p>	<p>Is the Code of Behaviour agreed?</p> <p>Does it include an Incident Management approach?</p>			
<p><b>Insurance</b></p>	<p>Is there adequate insurance in place to cover public liability and personal injury?</p> <p>Are all specific insurance needs covered?</p>			
<p><b>The Environment</b></p>	<p>Have all of the participants and adults received Leave No Trace Awareness training?</p> <p>Have the 7 Leave No Trace Principles been adequately incorporated into the plan?</p> <p>Has a reconnaissance trip to the locality taken place to gather local knowledge concerning the route, any specific environmental issues and any specific hazards?</p>			
<p><b>Route</b></p>	<p>Has an adequate route plan been agreed including emergency options?</p> <p>Is this available to the Named Contact?</p> <p>Has the route been checked and are any access issues known?</p> <p>Have any permissions and/or permits been received?</p>			

Risk Area	Adventure Journey Planning	Sufficient?	Not Sufficient?	Mitigation required
<p><b>Equipment</b></p>	<p>Are all participants and accompanying adults aware of the personal gear, including clothing, that they will require and do they have access to it?</p> <p>Has all group gear been identified and sourced?</p> <p>Has any specialist / emergency gear been identified and sourced?</p> <p>Are all participants and accompanying adults suitably briefed and properly trained in the use of all required personal, group, specialist and emergency gear?</p>			
<p><b>Transport</b></p>	<p>Is there adequate transport organised to get participants and accompanying adults to the start point of the adventure Journey and to collect them at the end point?</p> <p>Are arrangements in place for the evacuation of individual participants or the full group should the need arise?</p>			
<p><b>Training</b></p>	<p>Has required training been completed? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Aid</li> <li>• Navigation</li> <li>• Specialist skills</li> </ul>			
<p><b>Practice</b></p>	<p>Have the group had sufficient practice journeys to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build an appropriate and robust approach to teamwork and decision-making?</li> <li>• Develop the skills they will need to complete the Adventure Journey?</li> <li>• Establish that all participants have an adequate level of fitness to undertake the Adventure Journey as planned?</li> </ul>			

Risk Area	Adventure Journey Planning	Sufficient?	Not Sufficient?	Mitigation required
<b>Food &amp; Cooking</b>	<p>Is the menu appropriate for the nature of the journey and the likely conditions?</p> <p>Are the participants briefed / trained in what to buy, how to store it during transportation and how to cook it properly?</p>			
<b>Accommodation</b>	<p>Is the proposed accommodation appropriate for the needs of the participants and adults?</p> <p>Are hostels / campsites booked?</p> <p>If Camping, does the group have the skills required and is all of the required equipment available?</p>			
<b>Observation &amp; Recording</b>	<p>Has the group decided on their approach to the report?</p> <p>Have tasks been assigned to ensure adequate information, materials, images are collected along the way?</p> <p>Has it been decided how to record any Incidents?</p>			
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	<p>Has this form been properly filled in?</p> <p>Has it been checked to ensure it lists all of the risks inherent on <i>this</i> Adventure Journey?</p> <p>Have all relevant risks been identified and adequately mitigated?</p>			



## Appendix B - Leave No Trace

Leave No Trace Ireland is a network of organisations and individuals with an interest in promoting the responsible recreational use of the outdoors. The network promotes and inspires responsible outdoor recreation through education, research and partnerships.

The programme strives to build awareness, appreciation and respect for Ireland's natural and cultural heritage and is dedicated to creating a nationally recognised and accepted outdoor ethic that promotes personal responsibility. It encourages all outdoor enthusiasts (e.g. walkers, mountain bikers, canoeists, orienteers, horse riders) to do their part to maintain those lands used by the public for the benefit of the environment and for future generations.

At the heart of Leave No Trace are 7 principles for reducing the damage caused by outdoor activities

### Plan Ahead and Prepare

- Before you go check, where possible, if access is allowed and your activity is permitted in the area you wish to visit.
- Respect any signs, regulations, policies and special concerns for the area that you wish to visit. Permits may sometimes be needed for activities on public lands.
- Where possible travel by public transport or share cars; consider the availability of parking.
- Ensure you have the skills and equipment needed for your activity and to cope with emergencies that could arise.
- Check the weather forecast and always be prepared for changing weather conditions.
- For environmental and safety reasons, and to minimise your impact on other users, keep group numbers small; split larger parties into smaller groups.

### Be Considerate of Others

- Respect the people who live and work in the countryside.
- Park appropriately - avoid blocking gateways, forest entrances or narrow roads. Remember that farm machinery, local residents and the emergency services may need access at all times.
- Take care not to damage property, especially walls, fences and crops.
- Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.
- Let nature's sounds prevail. Keep noise to a minimum.

### Respect Farm Animals and Wildlife

- Dogs should be kept under close control and should only be brought onto hills or farmland with the landowner's permission. Some public areas stipulate that dogs must be kept on a lead at all times, please adhere to local guidelines.
- Observe wild animals and birds from a distance. Avoid disturbing them, particularly at sensitive times: mating, nesting and raising young (mostly between spring and early summer).

- Keep wildlife wild, don't feed wild animals or birds - our foods damage their health and leave them vulnerable to predators.
- Farm animals are not pets; remain at a safe distance.

### **Travel and Camp on Durable Ground**

Durable ground includes established tracks and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow.

*In popular areas:*

- Concentrate use on existing tracks and campsites.
- To avoid further erosion, travel in single file in the middle of the track even when wet or muddy.

*In more remote areas:*

- Disperse use to prevent the creation of new tracks and campsites.
- Avoid places where impacts are just beginning to show.

*If camping:*

- Protect water quality by camping at least 30m from lakes and streams.
- Keep campsites small and discreet.
- Aim to leave your campsite as you found it, or better.

### **Leave What You Find**

- Respect property. For example, farming or forestry machinery, fences, stone walls etc. Leave gates as you find them (open or closed).
- Preserve the past: examine - without damaging - archaeological structures, old walls and heritage artefacts e.g. holy wells, mine workings, monuments.
- Conserve the present: leave rocks, flowers, plants, animals and all natural habitats as you find them. Fallen trees are a valuable wildlife habitat; do not remove or use for firewood.
- Avoid introducing non-native plants and animals e.g. zebra mussels in rivers and lakes.
- Do not build rock cairns, structures or shelters

### **Dispose of Waste Properly**

- "If You Bring It In, Take It Out" - take home all litter and leftover food (including tea bags, fruit peels and other biodegradable foods).
- To dispose of solid human waste, dig a hole 15-20cms deep and at least 30m from water, campsites and tracks. Cover and disguise the hole when finished.
- Bring home toilet paper and hygiene products.
- Wash yourself or your dishes 30m away from streams or lakes and if necessary use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Bring home any solids and scatter strained dishwater.
- For more information on sanitation in the outdoors read the "Where to go in the outdoors" leaflet

### **Minimise the Effects of Fire**

- Fires can cause lasting impacts and be devastating to forests, natural habitats and farmland. Therefore when camping use a lightweight stove for cooking.
- Where fires are permitted: Use established fire rings or barbecues or create a mound fire.
- Keep fires small. Only use sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand. Do not use growing vegetation as firewood.
- Avoid burning plastics or other substances which emit toxic fumes.
- Burn all fires to ash, put out fires completely, and then scatter cool ashes.

*For further information:*

*Contact Leave No Trace Ireland at [info@leavenotraceireland.org](mailto:info@leavenotraceireland.org)*

*Or visit [www.leavenotraceireland.org](http://www.leavenotraceireland.org)*

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