



Gaisce

the President's Award

GAISCE - THE PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Adventure Journey Policy

NB: This is a working document and will be amended and updated as is necessary. The **Adventure Journey Supervisor** is a new concept for Gaisce and where it is used throughout this document, it is referring to a future requirement. Please see the glossary for a definition. Also, please note **that Adventure Journey Supervisor Training** is currently being designed and piloted and will eventually be rolled out for all PALs and interested parties to facilitate the implementation of the Adventure Journey Supervisor role.

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1 Policy Statement and Rationale

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

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 decrease the consequences if an accident does occur.

This policy statements sets out the requirements for planning and participating in a Gaisce Award Adventure Journey and the necessary procedures that must be followed in order to meet the criteria of the Award.

The PAL must ensure that the Adventure Journey Policy is followed by all participants, PALs and 3rd parties.

The aim of the Policy is to ensure that all adventure activities undertaken are conducted with the highest regard for the safety of all involved. This policy aims to minimise inherent risks by promoting safe procedures in the management of participants taking part in outdoor adventure activities

2 Types of Adventure Journey

All Adventure Journeys must have a clearly stated purpose which can be developed and modified during the period of training and preparation. This is intended to ensure that participants develop a connection to the area in which they journey, with their senses alert to their surroundings, observing and noting relevant facts and feelings.

There are two types of Adventure Journey

- Expedition
- 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.

3 Requirements for the Adventure Journey

The following detail outlines the criteria for achieving the Award standard:

1. The journey, with an agreed purpose, should be undertaken 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 completing their Award, but they should be peer group equals making decisions together.
3. The environment chosen should be unfamiliar to the participants. Ideally, in an unfamiliar environment, requiring determination, physical effort, perseverance and cooperation to complete. A natural and remote environment provides an opportunity for a challenging and rewarding journey
4. Staying in a self-catering hostel, camping or in suitable accommodation. Cooking at least one substantial meal per day.
5. Bringing all gear and/equipment on the journey.
6. The days on the venture are consecutive and must involve a journey going from point A to B to C etc.
7. Spending the entire specified period of time exclusively on the expedition.
8. The environment chosen should be challenging but within the capabilities of the team.
9. All Adventurous Journey requirements must be considered with reference to any applicable adventure activity standards, local laws or agreements and any relevant safety guidelines.
10. Safety is paramount when it comes to the Adventure Journey. It is essential that participants perform a risk assessment, which must be read by all PALs, Supervisors and Participants and Parents in preparing for their Adventure Journey.
11. Participants need to have the appropriate skills to undertake their journey and will likely need to undergo relevant training and need to undertake sufficient practice to ensure that they have the ability to be self-reliant and safe in their chosen environment.
12. The Journey can take place on land or water. The team can travel by their own efforts, (foot, cycle, canoe, etc.), by animal (horse, camel etc.) or by other non-motorised assistance (sail etc.).
13. Where the means of travel is other than walking e.g. Kayaking or Sailing, a basic level of competence and skill is required in order to make the journey safe.
14. On completion, participants are required to present a report to their PAL. This report can be written, photographic, verbal, a video diary, or by other imaginative means
15. All Adventure Journeys should be supervised and evaluated by the PAL and/or Adventure Journey Supervisor.
16. Time Requirements

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

Minimum Requirements for an Expedition

Bronze Award - Two days and one night

- Walking distance: A minimum of 25 - 35 km
- Cycling distance: A minimum of 100 - 130 km
- Canoeing distance: A minimum of 20 km (12.5 miles)
- *All the above over two consecutive days*

Silver Award - Three days and two nights

- Walking distance: A minimum of 50 . 79 km
- Cycling distance: A minimum of 190 . 220 km
- Canoeing distance: A minimum of 40 km (25 miles)
- *All the above over three consecutive days*

Gold Award - Four days and three nights

- Walking distance: A minimum of 80 . 110 km
- Cycling distance: A minimum of 300 . 350 km
- Canoeing distance: A minimum of 60 km (37 miles)
- *All the above over four consecutive days*

There are a number of components to the Adventure Journey.

1. Preparation and Planning
2. Risk Assessments
3. Training
4. Supervision required
5. Safety procedures
6. Actual Journey

4 Adventure Journey Guidelines

4.1 Planning & Preparation

Proper planning, preparation and training is key in order that participants are well prepared for their Adventure Journey.

Initially, the team in conjunction with their PAL should discuss the possibilities for the Adventure Journey. Consider its purpose, environment and mode of travel, will it be an expedition or an exploration, taking into account the requirements of the Award.

Preparation includes deciding on the team members . who will be coming, the size of the team, its aim, how they will travel and the environment they will travel through.

PALs and Participants have agreed a code of conduct including social media and mobile phone use, and the use of digital media arising from the trip.

Clear checks need to be in place to ensure safety, appropriate behaviour and outline the consequences if the code of conduct is not kept

Once this is decided the PAL should complete the Adventure Journey Checklist and risk assesment

4.2 Basic Risk Assessment

For every adventure journey it is necessary to complete a risk assessment. This 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 or Adventure Journey Supervisor will put in place to minimise (to an acceptable level) the risk of harm occurring.

The following is not an exhaustive list and the PAL and the participants should review this during the planning phase to ensure a complete risk assessment is completed for their journey.

- Travel Plan . to and from the Adventure Journey start and end
- Insurance Assessment . is adequate insurance in place?
- Supervision requirements . what supervision /adult ratio is needed and what briefing is required for this group
- Medical Assessment . what first aid and emergency procedures are required
- Safety and safe practice (relevant to the type of journey or environment).
- Route planning and navigation (use of maps or street directories)/local knowledge.
- Camp craft/accommodation
- Team building and leadership training
- Preparation of food and cooking
- Environmental awareness and care
- Necessary equipment and how to use it
- Technical skills in the mode of travel
- Observation and recording skills

The Adventure Journey Checklist included in this document is a template only, each expedition requires its own specific checklist and risk assessment

Adventure Journey Supervisor should have undertaken the Adventure Journey supervisor training or a similar level qualification provided by a certified partner.

If a PAL wishes to act as the Adventure Journey Supervisor they should undertake the Adventure Journey Supervisor Training or have the recommended qualifications to do so and be able to carry out a basic risk assessment.

If your adventure journey involves undertaking an activity that requires specialist resource or training, this needs to be in place before completing your journey and the correct level of expert supervision is in place during the journey.

At all levels of the Award:

1. Some members of the group **should** be fully trained in Basic First-Aid
2. Some members of the group **should** be trained in map and compass reading
3. If specific expertise is required then ALL members of the group **Must** be trained in this expertise

4.3 Training

Training may be required to enable participants to safely undertake their agreed upon journey. Kayaking or canoeing will require expertise to complete unless they are already highly skilled in the necessary techniques. Similarly, other skills such as navigation and route planning, camp craft, highway and water sports codes may be required.

Basic First Aid and/or emergency procedures are required by at least one member of the Adventure Journey Group. The actual number of trained members will depend on the size of the group and also the extent of the risk.

Any training identified should be carried out by a suitably experienced and/or qualified person.

4.4 Supervision Requirements

Minimum supervision ratios and criteria are one leader to every 8 participants.

The level of supervision required can depend on the Award being undertaken and the nature of the activities planned. However, there should be a minimum of two adults (PAL or Adventure Journey Supervisor and other adult volunteers participating in the actual activity (i.e. hike, cycle etc.)

All Award Adventure Journeys, whether walking, cycling, canoeing etc. must be supervised by the PAL and/or the Adventure Journey Supervisor.

At the discretion of the Adventure Journey Supervisor, the number of adults may at times be higher than in the stated ratio because of:

- age, experience or capability of the students
- combined experience or expertise of the staff
- nature of the area in which the activity is to be conducted

In such cases, the supervisor must make all adults aware of the code of behaviour required to participate, and make a copy of the PAL handbook and Child Protection policy available to them.

If the group undertaking the activity is split into smaller independent subgroups then each subgroup must conform to the criteria set out in this policy.

4.5 Overnight Stays

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

PALs, supervising adults, participants & their parents should be aware of the following:

1. PAL is required to chaperone participants during an overnight taking into account any supervision and gender ratios.
2. Medical information which might be relevant e.g. allergies, inhalers, etc. should be known to PALs prior to departing on the adventure journey, and appropriate contingencies taken.
3. Sleeping arrangements must be appropriate for males and females and for under and over 18s. Sleeping areas for males and females should be in separate quarters and supervised by two (if possible) adults of the same gender as the group being supervised.
4. Agree a code of behaviour specifically in relation to the overnight element with participants and agree consequences should the code of behaviour be breached. Maintaining standards and good practice in the relaxed atmospheres of a trip away from home may be difficult as normal boundaries and standards of behaviour can be inadvertently crossed over.

4.6 Third Party Providers

All third party agents providing, promoting or facilitating a Gaisce Adventure journey are in essence acting as Adventure Journey Supervisors and are bound by the same conditions.

Additionally they must have in place a Child Protection Policy (incorporating protection policies for under 18 and vulnerable adults), a Safety Statement, a Risk Management System, an Incident Reporting and Emergency Planning System.

All third party providers should have appropriate level Insurance to carry out the activities.

The PAL/ Adventure Journey Supervisor must ensure that third party providers have all of the above in place.

4.7 Recommended Safety Procedures

- a) Where the activities require speciality equipment this should be tested and certified to the relevant standards, and inspected by the Adventure Journey Supervisor.
- b) All participants on the Journey should remove jewellery and other ornaments when they are deemed a threat to safety. All are required to secure long hair if it is likely to impair vision or impede performance or deemed a threat to safety
- c) A foot expedition should leave a clear map of their route with at least one specified person, before embarking on the Adventure Journey.
- d) The approximate time required for completing each section should be specified. This will assist both from a safety point of view and in case a participant needs to be contacted urgently.
- e) Emergency contact numbers should be available to leaders and to a nominated person who is not participating in the adventure.
- f) The group should have an emergency plan with their map, in the event of bad weather or if a Participant becomes ill or incapacitated. For this reason, the plan should contain a brief description of what the group will do in an emergency on each stage of the walk, for example %W/e will descend to the roadway on the right of our route and proceed to the nearest house+. This simplifies matters if there is an emergency. The information should also contain the telephone numbers of hostels in which the group is staying.
- g) The leader must be satisfied that the route complies with the requirements for the Award and that the requirements are being met in practice, particularly the specified obstacles
- h) For remote activities, local and, where appropriate, interstate authorities are to be notified both before departure and on return.
- i) Telephone contact must be possible for the duration of the activity.

4.8 Local Knowledge

For activities requiring knowledge of the local area, the Adventure Journey Supervisor should source information from two or more of the following:

- a reconnaissance trip to the venue
- reputable publications and websites
- recreational practitioners
- landowners
- stakeholders (including the traditional owners advice providers)
- clubs

Inquiries should be made about:

- availability of drinking water
- revegetation areas
- changes to entry and exit points
- recent restrictions such as camping and fire restrictions
- new tracks or roads and new locked gates
- hazard reduction work

- temporary deviations to tracks or roads
- discrepancies between venue and the topographical map depicting it

5 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

5.1 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.

5.2 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.

5.3 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.

5.4 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.

5.5 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

5.6 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

5.7 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, 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 for use 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.

6 Glossary

<p>Adventurous Journey . The Adventurous 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.</p> <p>Adventure Journey Supervisor - A suitably qualified and experienced adult who is responsible for a group's safety throughout their Adventurous Journey, for supervising, for assessing the ability of an individual or team to carry out their journey and for signing off on the actual journey once it has been completed. A PAL can also be the Adventurous Journey Supervisor provided they undertake appropriate training or have necessary skills and experience.</p> <p>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 staff, PALs and participants.</p> <p>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</p> <p>Incident . unplanned occurrence or near miss, with the potential to cause actual harm or a change of plan.</p>	<p>Parent(s) refers to adults with parental responsibilities, including carers.</p> <p>Participant . A young person who is registered to participate in the Bronze, Silver or Gold Award.</p> <p>President's Award Leader (PAL) – The President's Award Leader can be any adult volunteer who is the contact and mentor for an Award Group or individual. The PAL is responsible for engaging young people in their chosen Award sections, inspiring, guiding and assisting them from start through to completion. The PAL signs off on the entirety of a participant's Award at completion stage but can also sign off on individual sections of the Award where appropriate.</p> <p>Risk analysis and safety management - System by which an Adventure Journey is assessed and managed to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all members of the adventure journey. Comprises the Safety Statement, Risk Assessments and Adventure Journey Policy and emergency and contingency plan.</p> <p>Third Party Provider . any service provided by one or more contracted services to fulfil the Adventure Journey</p> <p>Supervision Ratio - refers to the Adventure Journey Activity Supervisor to participant ratio. The ratio may vary depending on the nature of the journey. Please refer to activity - specific procedures.</p>
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7 Adventure Journey Checklist & Risk Assessment

This form should be completed by the PAL and/or Adventure Journey Supervisor for every Adventure Journey

Gaisce Adventure Journey Checklist and Risk Assessment		
Adventure Journey	<i>List the name of the Organisation and Year</i>	
Event Date Start and End	<i>Starts</i>	<i>Ends</i>
Purpose of Journey	<i>What is the specific purpose agreed by the group?</i>	
Group Size (number of Participants)	<i>Total group and number of sub groups</i>	
Where	<i>Where is the start and end point of the Adventure Journey</i>	
Accommodation Type	<i>Camping, Hosteling, etc.</i>	
1st Aid Certification	<i>How many of the group have first aid training/certification?</i>	
Supervision Ratio	<i>Number of Adults to Young People</i>	
PAL Name	<i>Name of the PAL</i>	
Adventure Journey Supervisor	<i>Name of person who is responsible for safety on the Journey</i>	

Risk Area	Adventure Journey Planning	<i>Sufficient</i>	<i>Not Sufficient</i>	<i>Mitigation Required</i>
Venture Planning	Who are the leaders and supervisors on the journey? Are specific roles required such as medical officers, specific group supervisors for males/females, and so on?			
Venture Planning	Provisions/Equipment Have all Food and Water provisions been identified? Any specialist Equipment Specific clothing and equipment required			
Venture Planning	Insurance Insurances from all parties involved Specific insurances required			
Environmental Risk	Environment – consider all aspects of the environment in which the journey will take place. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locations researched and considered suitable including accessibility and inclusivity • Weather Forecast and impact considered • Is an Environmental Impact assessment required • Are any permissions required 			

Environmental Risk	Navigation and Route Planning Route Plan identified			
Health & Safety	Incident Management Emergency plans and rescue required			
Health & Safety	Training Needs – Assess what training is required within the group to carry out the Adventure Journey successfully? Training needs Assessment Completed - 1 st Aid, specialist skills and so forth			
Health & Safety	Consents – have all necessary consents been obtained including medical confirmations			
Health & Safety	Code of Conduct agreed – disciplinary in case of breach			
Health & Safety	3 rd Party confirmations required in relation to Child Protection and Safety Management			
Travel & Accommodation	Travel Plans – what are the plans for getting to point the start and returning from the finish line Consider delays to and from			
Travel & Accommodation	Accommodation – is it appropriate for needs of the group and their supervisors? If Camping, has a full skills and equipment checklist been provided			

