

# Tirabad Outdoor Educational Centre

Llangammarch Wells, Powys, Wales



Kayaking · Canoeing · Climbing · Abseiling · Coasteering · Gorge Scrambling · Caving · Mountaineering · Off-Road Cycling · Mine Exploration



## Visiting Staff Handbook

Stuff that's worth a read,  
especially if it's your first time here.

**Head of Centre:** Nick Winder  
**Address:** Tirabad Residential Education Trust  
Tirabad Mansion, Llangammarch Wells, Powys, LD4 4DS.

**E-mail:** [tirabad@ukcentre.com](mailto:tirabad@ukcentre.com)  
**Tel:** 01591 610295 (for emergency use only)

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## **A. ABOUT THE CENTRE**

Tirabad Residential Education Centre is situated in the village of Tirabad near Llangammarch Wells about twenty miles from Brecon. The building formerly a hunting lodge is now run by the Tirabad Trust. Tirabad serves the needs of students throughout the year providing Outdoor Activities and Field Study courses as well as more specialised courses as the need arises. Three full time teachers staff the centre, all experienced and qualified to lead outdoor activities (qualifications checklist enclosed) and three student instructors.

## **B. RATIONALE**

Outdoor Education encompasses a range of planned educational activities, which take place outside, but not separate from, the traditional school setting.

Outdoor Education includes:

- Outdoor activities such as camping, canoeing, caving, expeditions, orienteering, kayaking, mountain walking, rock climbing, bushcraft and gorge walking.
- First hand study of the environment and of mans symbiotic relationship with it.
- The residential experience is an integral part of Tirabad.

Outdoor education is concerned with the overall development of young people. It is an approach to learning in which direct experience is of paramount importance, but it is not a subject in itself, rather it is a cross curricular model pertinent to all phases of education. It is this feature that enables Outdoor Education to enhance learning in a wide range of subject areas in addition to making a valuable contribution to the personal and social development of young people.

Outdoor Education is concerned with enabling pupils to realise their potential as opposed to what they perceive is possible.

## **C. AIMS**

It is realistic to state the following as attainable aims for Residential Outdoor Education.

- To provide an opportunity for concentrated study to enrich academic work.
- To provide physical and emotional challenges through the medium of outdoor activities, so that pupils may discover more about themselves and gain in self-confidence.

- To increase initiative, independence, interdependence and self discipline through cooperation and trust in hazardous environments and shared living conditions.
- To encourage pupils to develop lively, enquiring minds, power of observations, logical thought and communication.
- To encourage the development of moral and spiritual values and the will to base life and behaviour upon them.
- To equip pupils with skills, knowledge and attitude, which will help them to live their lives as, self respecting and competent individuals, able to make informed and reasoned choices for themselves, having regard to the needs of others.
- To develop an awareness of danger and engender a sense of responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others
- To motivate pupils to use their leisure time enjoyably and purposefully
- To encourage and help pupils to aim at achieving the highest standards of which they are capable.

## **D. OBJECTIVES**

Outdoor Education is concerned with the personal, social and academic development of young people via the acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes, concepts and values.

In the area of **personal development** Outdoor Education should:

- Enable pupils to develop self confidence, self reliance, self control and self sufficiency
- Foster the development of physical skills and of physical resilience
- Encourage pupils to exercise initiative and judgement in unfamiliar and challenging situations
- Allow pupils to develop an awareness and respect for potential dangers in the natural environment and to act appropriately
- Encourage pupils to assess their own capabilities, strengths and limitations and to appreciate those of others
- Broaden the range of pupils experiences and to develop their ability to work as a member of a team
- Encourage pupils to develop planning and organisational; skills and provide opportunities for pupils to exercise leadership abilities
- Provide opportunities for pupils to experience success

In the area of **social development** Outdoor Education should:

- Encourage pupils to communicate and co operate effectively and to participate in learning as members of a group

- Enhance the quality of relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils
- Encourage pupils to share decision making and a sense of collective responsibility for their actions and behaviour
- Encourage pupils to have due regard for the feelings, welfare and safety of fellow pupils
- Develop an awareness of the need to act with due regard for the interests of other users and of local residents in areas where activities are undertaken
- Encourage pupils to be aware of the need for care, conservation and management of the environment

In the area of **academic development** Outdoor Education should:



- Encourage pupils to relate learning undertaken in the classroom to real situations and vice versa
- Develop skills of observation, investigation and analysis
- Develop the ability of pupils to make productive use of information gained through first hand experience
- Develop the ability of pupils to communicate effectively in a variety of situations and in a variety of ways
- Support learning and foster interest in a range of subject areas
- Develop an understanding of the natural environment and of our interaction with it
- Enable pupils to make appropriate use of a range of technical equipment
- Promote greater motivation towards learning in general

## STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

Regularly updated – phone for details

<b>NICK WINDER (HEAD OF CENTRE)</b>	<b>TIM HINDLE (DEPUTY HEAD)</b>	<b>CHRIS WATSON (TUTOR/INSRUCTOR)</b>
BEd (Hons) Science and Outdoor Education with QTS (secondary) APIOL	BSc Geography QTS (secondary)	
First Aid at Work Mountain Rescue First Aid Certificate	Rescue and Emergency Care First Aid	Rescue and Emergency Care First Aid
Mountaineering Instructor Award*	Summer Mountain Leader Award	Summer Mountain Leader
Bushcraft Practitioner	Single Pitch Climbing Award	Single Pitch Climbing Award
	Winter Mountain Leader Award	
Technical advisor for mountain and climbing activities		
Local Cave Leader Level Two(CIC trained)	Local Cave Leader Level One	Local Cave Leader Level One
BCU Level 3 Kayak	BCU Level 3 Kayak 5 star trained	BCU Level 3 Kayak 5 star trained
BCU Level 3 Canoe 5 star trained	BCU Level 3 Canoe 5 star Trained	BCU Level 3 Canoe 5 star trained
MIAS Mountain biking leader Level 2*		Swift Water Rescue Technician 1
RYA Power Boat Coxn Level 4	British Orienteering Federation Leader	
GNAS (archery)		

\*Technical Advisor Status in Accordance With Adventurous Activities Licensing Authority

\*Richard Hill CIC is the technical adviser for Caving

\*Sean Taylor BCU Level Four is the technical adviser for Paddlesport

### TRAINEE INSTRUCTORS

Tirabad also employs three student instructors who come from differing backgrounds with different experiences of outdoor education. They are on a one-year educational placement working towards an Open College Network qualification level three in Outdoor Education as well as gaining a wealth of experience in outdoor activities and education. All are interested in a future career either in teaching or outdoor education

## TIRABAD DAILY ROUTINE

07:00	WAKE UP
07:45	ROOM INSPECTION
07:55	BREAKFAST DUTY
08:00	BREAKFAST
08:30	PREPARE PACKED LUNCH
08:50	DAILY BRIEFING IN DINING ROOM
09:00	MORNING DUTIES
09:30	MEET FOR ACTIVITIES
17:00	RETURN FROM ACTIVITIES
17:30	EVENING DUTIES AND CENTRE STAFF END OF DAY
18:00	EVENING MEAL
19:30	EVENING ACTIVITIES – supervised by visiting staff
21:00	HOT CHOCOLATE
21:15	WASH CUPS, SET TABLES FOR BREAKFAST
21:30	READY FOR BED
21:45	IN BED AND LIGHTS OUT (variable)
22:00	SLEEP

The centre rules are few and based on consideration, courtesy, care and common sense and include a ban on smoking, alcohol and visiting the dormitory areas of the opposite sex.

## TEACHER'S DAILY ROUTINE

07:00	WAKE UP CHILDREN
07:45	INSPECT DORMS - score sheet is in staff room
07:55	ENSURE SERVING DUTY GROUP GO TO KITCHEN – group list in staff room and dining room
08:00	BREAKFAST
08:45	SUPERVISE WASHING UP – important to ensure it is done well
09:30	MEET FOR ACTIVITIES
17:00	RETURN FROM ACTIVITIES
17:30	SUPERVISE WASHING LUNCHBOXES AND SETTING UP TABLES
18:00	EVENING MEAL
18:30	SUPERVISE WASHING UP
21:00	SUPERVISE HOT CHOCOLATE
21:15	SUPERVISE WASHING CUPS, SET TABLES FOR BREAKFAST – check whether next breakfast is cooked or not
21:30	READY FOR BED
21:45	IN BED AND LIGHTS OUT (variable)
22:00	SLEEP

On a seven-day course – on Monday night – visiting staff can leave site from 6pm, but must return no later than 10pm.



## TIRABAD GAMES LIST

<b>BOARD GAMES</b>	<b>TEAM GAMES</b>	<b>OTHERS</b>
Mastermind	Football	Table Tennis
Pictionary	Volleyballs	Cards
Cluedo	Rounders	Lexicon
Monopoly	Rugby	Twister
Connect 4	Cricket	Frisby
5 in a Row	Table Football	Charades
Draughts		Recorder
Scrabble		Skipping Rope
Snakes & Ladders		Jenga
Chinese Chequers		
Triominoes		
Chess		

These games are available for children to borrow when they have free time during their course. We require a small deposit (£2 or some other object of value) to be paid which is returnable when the game is returned.

## RESPONSIBILITIES WHILST YOU ARE THERE

The responsibility for the running of the centre and the well being of everyone, staff and pupils, must devolve on the Head teacher or Deputy Head teacher of the centre. This responsibility includes the management of the domestic staff, the allocation of kit and the day to day running of the centre.

For each course one member of the Tirabad staff will act as the Course Director and is usually the first point of contact between visiting staff and centre staff. The course director will liaise with the school prior to the visit to organise the programme and help answer any queries. The course director or sometimes, another member of centre staff, will be on call each evening and leave a contact number in case of emergency.

It is however the policy of the Trust that centre staff and visiting staff should work together as a team and whenever possible should share responsibilities, particularly when dealing with the pupils and their work on the course. On every course, it is important that there should be a good rapport between staff, that every effort should be made to keep each other informed about the pupils, decisions taken and important occurrences and that matters relating to the group should be openly discussed.

The visiting staff are required to take responsibility for ensuring that pupils are up promptly in the morning and that duty teams are present for their duties at appropriate times. All staff share responsibility for the conduct and completion of these duties.

It is the responsibility of the Visiting staff to undertake the evening sessions and the overnight supervision of the pupils.

Centre staff have the responsibility of the entire group while on activity, whilst visiting staff have the responsibility of pupils behaviour and general social well-being.

In the event of a child being sent home, either through injury, or as a result of errant behaviour, it is the responsibility of the parents to collect them or to organise a collection. This should be made clear to the parents before the course.

## Evening entertainments can include the following:

- Year Seven diary session
- Problem solving games (there is a folder of ideas at the centre)
- Wide game
- Night hike for older children
- Table tennis tournaments
- Silly games e.g. wink murder
- Disco
- Talent show/ cabaret
- Course/activity reviews
- Academic follow up work

It is a good idea to come with a planned programme, if you are really struggling talk to your Tirabad coordinator or give us a ring. There is a box of ideas at the centre, which can also be used. Speak to any of the staff that have gone before. Year 7 tutors might want to get together and plan a programme that they can use for all visits that year.

If still in doubt have a chat with your course director and they will point you in the right direction.

## VISITING STAFF BRIEFING

A residential week is a major undertaking and is recognised as such. The following information is intended to ease the process. The key to the success of the week is your awareness of what is happening and the needs of the pupils. Your needs are our concern so please let us know your worries/problems. Our aim is to work as a team but we can all be guilty of failing to inform at times so please let us know if you feel left out. Full responsibility for the group during activities lays with centre staff for reasons of safety, they are all highly qualified at the activities you will be doing. Decisions often need making quickly due to the ever changing environment we work in, staff will be happy to discuss this with you, but please pick an appropriate time to do this. Any problems should be discussed with the Head of Centre at a later date.

## **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

### **FIRE**

Alarm rings - Evacuate building, count heads and confirm all are present **before** investigating the cause.

Phone the fire service from either the centre phone, if accessible, or the village pay phone. Take a centre mobile phone out with you.

If the children are evacuated and have to stay out, gain access to Ernie's, taking the key from your staff dorm with you.

**INFORM THE COURSE DIRECTOR AND/OR HEAD OF CENTRE A.S.A.P.**

**Nick Winder - Head of Centre**  
**Tim Hindle - Deputy Head of Centre**  
**Chris Watson – instructor/tutor**

*You will need to keep a full pupil and room list.*

## **MEDICAL EMERGENCY**

Prevent the condition becoming worse.  
Use first aid knowledge you have.  
Contact course director and/or emergency services if necessary.

The notice board to the side of the desk in the staff room has all the necessary emergency information you should need.

## **FIRST AID AND MEDICINES**

First aid kits are kept in the staff room and kitchen.  
You may also be issued with a small kit to carry with you each day. First aid supplies are kept in the cupboard marked "First Aid" in the staff room.

If an injury is beyond your capability summon centre staff.

Medication should only be given on Doctors advice. All medicines except inhalers, epileptic, diabetic and long term treatments should be collected. Children should not apply self-medication or take tablets from others. There is a YELLOW accident book to be filled in whenever first aid is administered, which is kept in the office. If a more serious incident requires there is a specific form to fill in that the course director will give to you. If the incident is more serious you must contact the course director and they will let you know what procedures to follow.

## **KEYS**

All keys are kept below the emergency information notice board.

Vehicle keys are kept on the wall next to the bookshelf in the staff room

## **VEHICLES**

Please make sure you are licensed to drive a minibus in accordance with the new DVLA scheme or have done a county minibus test at your school.

**It is the centre policy that visiting staff, which are usually unfamiliar with the vehicles and roads, only drive when essential. Authorisation rests with the Head of Centre. An endorsement for other than minor offences disqualifies driving for insurance reasons. So please check with the Head of Centre before stating that you are a minibus driver.**

Children should always be seated while the bus is in motion and maintain a reasonable noise level to avoid distracting the driver. The front seats should only be used when all other seats are occupied. Seat belts must be used at all times no matter how short the journey is.

The vehicles are subject to a 63 mph speed limit.

The driver must pay any parking fees and reclaim them later.

**Any fines incurred are the responsibility of the driver.**

**In the event of a breakdown either contact MBP Breakdown services or Peugeot Assist – the details of these are kept in the minibuses.**

The coach company details are as follows:

Williams Coaches, Cambrian Way, Brecon, Powys. LD3 7BE.

Tel. 01874 622223, e-mail – [office@williams-coaches.co.uk](mailto:office@williams-coaches.co.uk)

## **TRIP SWITCHES/LIGHTING**

There are two fuse boxes in the centre, and one in the classroom.

The two in the centre are located above the archway between the kitchen and washing up area and in a box in Merlin (key in the staff room). The one in the classroom is located in the archery cupboard (key in the staff room).

The most likely switch to trip is the Merlin one (unless some electrical item in the kitchen is faulty – this is usually the toaster and it is embarrassing to be caught snacking!). If the trip switch does turn off emergency lighting will automatically come on in the centre.

## **EXPECTATION**

Visiting Staff should be aware of what is going on particularly in those areas that the children are encouraged to use as their own e.g. the classroom. This does not mean full time direct supervision as the children must be trusted to a large extent and given freedom to develop. Antisocial behaviour and abuse of the facilities must be corrected. The centre staff will check that all is well before leaving the site in the evening. Remember someone is on call and will be available to help if you really need him or her.

Owing to our staffing levels it is necessary for visiting staff to run some of the activities. If this happens they will either work together or be working alongside one of the centre's Student Instructors.

If you are working alongside a Student remember that they probably know the centre routine better than you but you will have a lot more experience of children than them.

Remember that the centre staff are in charge on activities but we are a team and need to work together at all times.

## **THURSDAY EVENING**

After the evening meal on Thursday a Student Instructor will be on hand to supervise washing up duties. Whilst this is going on the course director will sit down and have an end of course review/ debrief with you. After this you need to organise the children so that they are as ready as possible to leave for Friday morning: i.e. pack, tidy rooms, empty the drying room, sort out any lost property and tidy the centre. This should all be done before you start the evening activity.

## **FRIDAY MORNING**

Wake up time is at 06:00 this morning. When the children are up they need to take their packed suitcases outside the porch by 06:45, have a thorough room inspection at 06:50 by centre staff and then come down for breakfast at 07:00. After breakfast final duties will be carried out before departure at 08:30.

## **TELEPHONE**

This is for emergency use only as far as children are concerned. Staff can use the phone and the internet. If the call costs are going to be excessive we ask that staff leave a contribution.

## **LAST THING AT NIGHT CHECK LIST**

Please ensure that lights are turned off except in toilet areas.

Don't forget: Outside lights  
Classroom  
Drying room (not the fan)

Kitchen should be tidy and sinks & draining boards clear and clean. Also make sure that the AGA lids are down. All tables should be properly laid up for breakfast; instructions are in the dining room.

All fire doors must be closed (check the kitchen/dining room door).



## HELPFUL HINTS FOR FIRST TIME VISITING STAFF

These are a few observations that have been made by those of us that are old hands at Tirabad visits. Just a few things that help to keep you sane!!!!

- Make certain that you have sorted out your lesson cover. You'll come back shattered and you really do not need to be picking up the pieces of what was taught to your classes. The more prescriptive you are the more likely it is for the work to be done as you expected.
- Get lots of sleep before you go. You won't get much while you are there. (Being an insomniac helps!!!) If it is an older group you can pretty much write off sleeping for the week!!!!!!
- You have the option of having the morning off before you go. Take it! Especially if it is your first visit – only teach a class if you think it is really important i.e. A Level. Remember you are giving up your weekend, so use the time to organise yourself and your cover before you go.
- You don't need a sleeping bag as you get given a duvet and pillows and blankets.
- There is a radio alarm clock in both staff bedrooms so you can find out what is going on in the world – believe me World War III could start and you would be none the wiser!
- Bring comfortable old clothes.
- Don't expect the pupils to be able to do *anything* we have all shown them how to wipe tables, wash up, and as for washing and keeping their rooms tidy.....
- **It is not a holiday.** You are perfectly within your right when you get back to snap at any other member of staff that asks "how was your holiday" especially if you look totally haggard. It will be one of the most physically and mentally tiring weeks of your life.
- Take a VERY big sense of humour with you. You'll need it and the pupils will appreciate seeing your human side. Just remember take photographic evidence of everything and use it against them for the rest of the time at the school.....
- When you get there you will need to help out both the centre staff and the pupils with their jobs and getting ready for the day. Ask the centre staff if you are not sure about something – they don't mind and they won't think any less of you, remember they do this every day, you are doing it for the first time!

- YOU do not need to do any activity that YOU don't want to. Having you scared to death in a group could cause more problems! BUT have a go if you want - you may surprise yourself!
- Getting pupils to do extra duties after evening meal is always useful to the smooth running of the next morning. I get the inside cleaners to sort out the drying room with one member of staff, whilst the other does the washing up. The rest of the pupils can sort out their rooms ready for bedtime. Then meet at 8pm for evening activities.
- AND FINALLY..... Have a great time, it is a unique opportunity to bond with pupils in a way you never thought possible. They will remember for a lifetime and will often talk about their trips to Tirabad in years to come. You are a big part of that so enjoy it with them.



## Other Useful Stuff

The cleaner's cupboard is under the stairs. It contains materials to clean up spillages and accidents such as vomiting. It also has stores of toilet paper and the hoovers. It has a padlock, the key for which is in the Boiler Room opposite.

The Boiler Room contains a store of spare clean bedding should it be required. On the left as you go in there is a plastic box on a shelf which contains the key for the Cleaners Cupboard. The soft brushes and mops in the boiler room are not to be used outside please, but they can be used in bathrooms and corridors etc.

The combination locks on the back door, the office and the inner drying room all have the same code

If there is damp equipment hanging outside in the evening please move it into the inner drying room to finish drying for the morning.

The music equipment, (CD players etc), in the staff room may be used by Tirabad or visiting staff only – no children may use them. They break too easily.

There is a laptop projector and laptop available. They live in the staff room. Visiting staff are welcome to use them for film nights etc. Please don't accidentally take cables away with you!

Graffiti is a problem on the beds – if you or a child finds some that hasn't been sanded please tell the course director, or the child may well get the blame and have to sand it off!

## **Description of Activities**

Problem Solving – Pupils work in groups of 6 – 8 who rotate around a series of challenges. Some are quite physical, others require teamwork and planning. Different problems are used for different year groups and the aim is to develop cooperation and planning, as well as provide feelings of achievement and fun!

Forest Adventure Walk – All the group (36 plus staff) go out for a day in the local forest. The walk will be broken up by various challenges and learning opportunities ranging from tree types to welsh lessons. Most trips include passing through serious mud and scrambling up streams. It is a full and tiring day that serves as a good introduction to the centre and can set the tone for the week.

Orienteering – There are several courses laid out ranging from an indoor course to a challenging course in the nearby forest. Which ones get used depends on the pupil's experience. The children work in small groups (2-4) allowing someone to summon help if one of the team gets hurt.

Caving – The groups explore one or more caves over the full day. Which cave depends on the age and experience of the group, combined with the conditions of the cave if it is affected by rainfall. Often the most worried about activity, that most pupils later rate as the best. Always includes learning about cave formation and development to some degree.

Elan Valley - Only usually done by year 7. In the morning the group visits the Elan valley dam and reservoir complex. They use the visitor's centre and complete a quiz under the guidance of a ranger. The group then drives around the dams, stopping for explanations en-route, and goes inside one of them. In the afternoon they undertake a short walk around the reservoirs which allows them to appreciate what they have been studying, and see various wildlife.

Gully Scramble – Done by year 7 and 8 in two gullies suitable for the ages. An adventurous activity that build teamwork, trust and awareness of abilities by climbing up and down steep stream ways.

Survival Day – Usually done only by year 7, this day involves the children building shelters from natural materials, starting fires with sparks onto tinder, finding water and boiling it, cooking bread on the fire, following tracks to find their lunch and a range of field craft skills as the opportunity arises. This activity is based on site.

Climbing – Is done on one of a range of venues, either quarried limestone or natural sandstone. The children will learn to belay each other (hold the ropes for) and how to climb. They will develop trust in their belayers and in the equipment, and this day often includes an opportunity to abseil too. The activity includes some learning about how the devices used work.

Archery – Is done on site on our own range. Children have to follow safety rules but will shoot numerous times at targets, balloons and odd shapes. There is often some form of competition.

Mountain Walk – Is done by year 8 upwards. The group will ascend one or more of the peaks in the Brecon Beacons learning how to navigate and walk as a team, as well as observing the plant & animal life, landforms and human impact as the opportunity arises.

Gorge Scramble/Walk – Is a more challenging gully scramble. More drops, jumps, rope work, water and fun. Venues vary according to weather conditions and the group's age and ability.

Canoeing - The group goes out in 2 person open canoes and learns how to paddle as a pair, various skills and how to watch out for and aid each other. Subsequent trips may allow a group to go out on a river to encounter rapids and white water. Initial experiences are on canals and placid rivers.

Kayaking – The same as canoeing except the children are in one-person kayaks and the skill development is all their own.

Merlin's/Rouble Challenge – Whole day problem solving and teamwork challenges that involve the groups amassing points for how well they do to progress and/or win. It is all based on site.

Spy Mission – Usually done by year 8. The morning is spent on site being trained to serve as spies – signalling, stretcher carries, parachute building etc. After lunch they get camouflage face paint and set off on a series of local challenges that involve crossing streams, building shelters, following trails, all while trying not to be observed by 'the enemy'. In the end they find a box, which allows them to earn a prize.

Bushcraft – This is an extension on the survival day and includes learning how to build a useable shelter, light fires by friction, safe and respectful use of a knife, edible plants, camp cooking, useful fungi, general campcraft and tracking. This activity runs with older children.