



INTRODUCTION

This document has been drawn up to assist schools and youth groups to meet the LEA requirement of providing a detailed risk assessment prior to their visit to us. We have summarised the main areas we believe will apply to bringing a group of young people to The Briars for a residential retreat.

METHOD AND PARAMETERS OF ASSESSMENT

The assessment carried out encompasses possible risks to members of school and other parties of young people which can reasonably be anticipated. We have prepared this document with reference to the following publications.

- *Health & Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits* Department for Education & Employment (DFEE) 1998
- *A Guide to Risk Assessment Requirements* Health & Safety Executive (HSE) 1999
- *Five Steps to Risk Assessment* Health & Safety Executive (HSE) 2011

The Assessment is presented in 3 main areas:

1. Assessment of general house and accommodation matters
2. Assessment of courses for young people
3. Assessment of walks

FREQUENCY OF ASSESSMENT

Regulations require that a Risk Assessment is revisited when 'you suspect that your assessment is no longer valid or there has been a significant change' (A Guide to Risk Assessment requirements HSE 1999) For this reason we review our Risk assessment every year and whenever changes are made to our programme and/or other practices. Whenever new sessions are added to our programme or new routes are considered for walks for example, the necessary Risk Assessment is carried out. Likewise all Briars staff are encouraged to make on-going risk assessments when they are leading walks or running activities.

MANAGEMENT & STAFFING

- The centre operates a policy for staff and volunteer recruitment, training and assessment which ensures all staff with a responsibility for the safety and welfare of the young people using the centre are competent to undertake the duties to which they are assigned
- The Briars follows the Diocese of Nottingham's Child Protection Policy. All Briars staff are checked through the Criminal Records Bureau. Staffs who have direct contact with the young people have enhanced CRB and DBS checks and are fully trained in good youth work practice.

PROGRAMME DELIVERY

- The centre maintains a clearly defined authority and chain of responsibility for each programme and has a system of reporting and accountability.
- The programme leaders are responsible for the supervision of volunteers and staff leading activities within a programme. Programme leaders possess the competencies, qualifications and experience required for the discharge of this responsibility.
- The Management Team of the centre confirm staff and volunteer competencies. Copies of the Competencies checklist are available from the centre.
- There will be adequate and regular opportunities for School staff/Leaders, accompanying the young people, to meet and liaise with the programme leader.
- Each programme contains sufficient flexibility for changes to be made regarding the content and activities if necessary and such changes will be made known to the Adults accompanying the young people.
- There are written operating procedures for each physical activity offered within a programme, appropriate to the site used and the level at which the activity is undertaken. The training

programme for all volunteers and staff includes hazard analysis and risk assessment for each physical activity to ensure the safety and welfare of the young people during an activity.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL STAFF / LEADERS ON BRIARS PROGRAMMES

- Adult leaders accompanying young people to The Briars remain in charge of them and *in loco parentis*.

This should be kept in mind by school staff/leaders when compiling their Risk Assessment. This document is intended as an aid in considering any potential risks in the centre. Group leaders will still have to consider other areas such as transport arrangements and the gathering of consent forms and medical information. Schools will need to do their own risk assessments for any educational visits to other venues arranged by the school whilst the group are staying at The Briars (mainly Primary Sector).

- To ensure that groups are adequately supervised all mixed groups must be accompanied by male and female leaders, regardless of the size of the group. The recommended ratio for leader:participants is 1:10.

If a group is less than 10 we will require a minimum of 1 male and 1 female leader where there is a mixed group.

We would also remind school staff/leaders of the following points:

- Any factors relating to groups or individuals which may put them at risk should be communicated to Briars staff so that we are able to make necessary considerations.
- The adults accompanying the group are responsible for pastoral and disciplinary matters at all times.
- The Briars policies will be outlined to accompanying leaders by the Programme Leader at the initial staff briefing. All Briars policies must be adhered to and supported by accompanying leaders.

LEVELS OF RISK

A residential visit to the The Briars would be considered as a low to medium risk activity. The Briars staff take their responsibilities to those who come here seriously. As far as as we are aware there have been no very serious injuries in the 43 years we have been operating as a residential youth centre, either in the centre itself or on related off-site activities.

The vast majority of activities on a visit for a senior programme will take place within the grounds of the Briars with the only off-site activities normally being an afternoon walk or a possible visit to bowling. The walks and visits to bowling would present the highest risks on any part of our courses but these are manageable risks. Any walks led by The Briars are deemed "low risk" when measured against the criteria used by organisations such as Scouts and Guides and mountaineering organisations.

INSURANCE

The Briars carries Employers and Third Party Liability Insurance. Schools are responsible for arranging any personal injury or damage/loss to personal property insurance as they see fit. Likewise the school should be aware of its contractual obligations and arrange cancellation insurance if considered desirable.

MEDICAL

There is a hospital in Ripley should it be required, but it is a small hospital, only capable of handling minor injuries. The nearest major Accident and Emergency unit is The Royal Derby in Derby. The Briars staff are not allowed to dispense medication.

The first recourse for any first aid treatment should be the groups own first-aider. There are qualified first aid Briars staff available.

USE OF IMAGES OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

All images will be of groups of young people, will not associate names with individuals, will always be monitored for appropriateness and will only be used in the publications and website of NDCYS (Nottingham Diocesan Catholic Youth Service). Safeguarding procedures will be applied at all times, as will the policy on 'The use of images of children and young people involved in Youth Service activities'.

ASSESSMENT OF GENERAL HOUSE & ACCOMMODATION MATTERS

POTENTIAL RISK/CONCERN	CURRENT ACTION/POLICY
House Security	All exits are locked at night and secured at all times by a keypad. The guest code to the keypad is changed regularly. All visitors are briefed on basic security measures. Young people are counted at the beginning of sessions and meal times to ensure that none are missing. They are also told not to leave the grounds - the boundaries of which are well defined and pointed out.
General Hazards in the House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive Health & Safety policy is in operation in the centre and must be observed by all staff. • Guests are expected to wear footwear at all times and care is taken to ensure that objects are not placed in areas where they may cause a hazard. • Appropriate warning signs are displayed when floors are wet and cleaning is normally done at a time when guests are engaged elsewhere. • Appropriate warning signs or markings are present around low ceilings or unusual changes of floor level. • Safety rails are placed on bunk beds
Fire Safety	The centre is protected by a fire alarm system, with automatic fire detection in every room. The system is tested weekly and the centre is visited by the Fire Officer. Arriving guests are made aware of fire exits and fully briefed on fire alarm procedures. Fire drills are normally carried out at least once a term. A no smoking policy is in operation throughout the house. Corridors and exit routes are marked with emergency lighting and photo-luminescent signs. Young people are normally discouraged from using heat producing electrical equipment such as hair-tongs / straighteners or irons.
Food & meal times	Kitchen staff are fully trained in food hygiene/handling and proper procedures apply to the storage, cooking and serving of food. Guests are asked to remain seated during meal times to minimise movement in the dining room. Environmental health officers inspect the kitchens regularly. Nuts are not generally used in cooking and all necessary attention is paid to any food allergies or intolerances when we are informed.
<u>Hazardous Substances</u>	The hazardous substances in the house are kept to a minimum and are stored in a locked area. <u>All staff</u> are COSHH (control of substances hazardous to health) trained and are aware of the correct procedures to apply should an emergency arise. <u>Young people are told that alcohol and drugs are prohibited.</u>
Noxious Gases	The boilers and other gas equipment are serviced annually and certificated by a "Gas Safe" engineer.
Accommodation	The centre is centrally heated, has some limited provision for young people with disabilities and provides: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sleeping areas which are well-lit, have adequate ventilation and with adequate room between beds to allow easy access to all facilities • a wash basin with hot and cold running water in each bedroom • Curtains to all bedroom windows and opaque glass in all bathroom windows • space for storage of luggage, clothes, rucksacks
Separation of Males/Females in sleeping accommodation.	Centre policy dictates that rooms must remain single sex for the young people. There are separate areas for male/female accommodation. Young people are not allowed in each other's bedrooms. Staff do not share with young people.
Toilet & Shower facilities	Facilities are kept clean and in good working order, with toilets being cleaned daily.
First Aid	A First Aid kit is available on the premises. Normally there is a First Aid trained member of staff on site.
Movement of vehicles on site	Care is taken to ensure that delivery vehicles and other visitors to the centre are aware of the presence of young people on the site.
Machinery, tools and electrical appliances	Young people are not given access to machinery and tools apart from basic items such as stereos or vacuum cleaners. All electrical appliances are subject to periodic inspection.
Electrical safety	The centre has periodic electrical inspection. RCDs and Earth Leakage breakers are in use throughout the building. Emergency lighting is provided..
Repair work and maintenance.	On occasions that repair work or maintenance is carried out, measures are taken to ensure that contractors and guests are made aware of any potential hazards. <u>Individual risk assessments are carried out on all proposed projects.</u>
Sessions, Activities and Games	Though much of our work involves discussion work and indoor activities, all course material is assessed to ensure that only reasonable risks are involved and that any potential risks have been appropriately addressed.
Equipment used both in sessions and social time	Measures are taken to ensure that all equipment provided by the centre which young people may use conforms to the necessary safety standards and is used appropriately
Valuables	The centre does not have a facility for the safe keeping of personal valuables, watches or jewellery.

ASSESSMENT OF WALKS AND OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES

Walks are a normal part of our programme and are seen as an area of increased risk. Due to the nature of our organisation and of the walks we undertake we are not required to be registered with the Adventure Activities Licensing Agency. Our walks are not undertaken more than 600 metres above sea level or more than half an hour from habitation or roads and they all follow designated footpaths which are not particularly arduous. However the staff are given full training in leading walks and measures are taken to ensure safety:

- We insist that all young people wear appropriate footwear and waterproof clothing
- We instruct young people not to approach animals.
- We instruct young people to stay on pavements when walking on roads or to stay to the side of the road where no pavement exists
- We ensure that a ratio of at least 1 adult to 10 young people is maintained and that the Briars staff on walks have been trained and briefed as to emergency procedures.
- We ensure that a First Aid Kit is carried on all walks.
- We ensure that The Briars are aware of which route a party has taken, how many people have gone and the estimated time of arrival back at the centre. At least one mobile phone is taken on the walk by Briars staff.
- The leaders of the walks stop at various points to allow the slower walkers to catch up and he/she will constantly ensure that the group is not too spread out. The group will also be counted often.
- Young people are instructed to take with them on walks or outings any medication they may need. Young people who are pointed out to us as having specific conditions are monitored as closely as is necessary.
- All warnings and information points are repeated to young people as necessary.
- Briars staff are well trained to handle any emergency which may reasonably be expected to arise on walks.
- When accompanying groups on walks Briars staff wear yellow jackets as a marker for the group and the person in charge.

In addition to walks, groups may be taken to Bowling as part of the programme. These activities will only be undertaken with the full permission and agreement of the participating schools. The same risk assessment and general precautions are applied to these activities as to walks with the additional measures as stated;

- Young people will be transported to the venue by private hire coach/minibus with appropriate numbers of staff to cover.
- A briefing will be given to all members of the party, prior to leaving the centre.
- The Briars staff are trained to be vigilant for and aware of any unexpected happening on the journey to and from the venue and during the course of the activity.
- Usually a car will accompany the group to Bowling in case of emergency. (e.g. an accident requiring hospital attention) In the event of a hospital visit being necessary a member of the Briars team will accompany school staff to the hospital.
- Team members will be equipped with mobile phones to ensure contact with the centre and the rest of the group.
- A First Aid Kit is carried.

CONCLUSION

Although it is impossible to provide a comprehensive list of every possible hazard and action we hope that this document will sufficiently cover the three specified areas. Risk assessment is an important part of our work at The Briars Catholic Youth Retreat Centre and is factored into the day to day running of the centre as well as to the training of new staff and the planning and implementation of educational material.