

Blyth Kayak Club
Risk Assessment Policy

Introduction

It is the aim of Blyth Kayak Club to enable people of all ages and abilities to enjoy kayaking at both recreational and competitive levels. It must be accepted that as a water sport there are hazards and risks involved. This policy will identify both general and specific hazards and will state procedures to minimise the risks and to ensure the safety of club members and visitors. The procedures outlined within this policy must be carried out by members involved in club activities at all times. It should be noted that the Child Protection Policy forms an integral part of this policy.

Potential Hazards and Risks

Hazards and risks will be grouped into four main categories-

Those generated by the individual and affecting the individual (medical conditions, lack of skill/experience, lack of confidence).

Those generated by the external environment (water conditions, weather conditions, swimming pool).

Those generated by members of the public with who club members may come into contact (other water craft, fishermen swimmers/surfers, onlookers, events organisers).

Those generated by club members, which may affect others (foolhardy behaviour, disregarding rules/procedures).

The precautions which are outlined in the following part of this document are to be followed in order to ensure that reasonable care has been taken to reduce the risks created by such hazards.

General

All members of the club should have current membership when taking part in club activities. Visitors may attend one taster session before becoming members.

All members will be asked to adhere to a code of conduct.

All members must read and sign copies of the Risk Assessment Policy and Child Protection Policy. Parents or guardians will be requested to sign copies for under 18s.

The club must be informed of any medical conditions which may place an individual at risk, however slight, when contact is first made with the club. This information will be treated with the strictest confidence.

Different levels of activities will be offered to club members in order to best meet levels of ability and confidence.

Swimming pool activities

All participants must be able to swim minimum of 50 metres.

A qualified lifeguard will be present at all sessions.

Participants will be placed in coaching groups according to ability.

Capsize drill will be practised at the earliest opportunity.

A first aid kit is readily accessible.

Safe methods of carrying kayaks to and from the poolside will be demonstrated.

All activities will be monitored by coaches and/or experienced club members.

Outdoor kayaking activities

All activities will be monitored by coaches and/or experienced club members.

There should never be less than 3 in a kayaking group.

Safety equipment should be worn at all times (helmet, buoyancy aid, spray-deck).

All equipment must be checked for defects which would make it unsafe.

Participants should wear suitable clothing suggested by the group leader.

Participants should carry items specified by the group leader (e.g. additional clothing, warm drink, food).

Participants should be aware of capsizes drills and rescue procedures.

First aid kits should be carried by the group and at least one member should hold a current first aid certificate.

Leaders should ensure that the river/sea conditions are within the capabilities of the group.

Weather and water conditions should be checked before the activity is undertaken.

Leaders should make participants aware of potential hazards.

If conditions change, the group leader must make an assessment as to whether it is safe to continue or whether the activity should be halted.

The activity should be undertaken at the pace of the slowest participant.

Emergency contacts and contact points should be established.

Where transport is shared, i.e. cars, it must be understood that individuals do so at their own risk.

A warm-up should be carried out before any physical activity is undertaken.

An activity plan should be left at base with a responsible adult.

Throughout the activity, participants should be aware of other water users and treat them both with caution and respect.

Competitions and other externally organized activities

All participants must abide by the rules of the event.

Members of the public and fellow competitors should be treated with respect.

Members of the club take part at their own risk.

Residential trips

Members are responsible for their own accommodation arrangements, unless a block booking has been made by the club.

Under 18s should be accompanied by a parent, unless by special arrangement, in which case a consent form must be signed.

Where transport is shared, members do so at their own risk.

All participants should be fully aware of the nature of the activities to be carried out.

Parent and other volunteer helpers

Helpers must follow procedures given by a member of the club committee.

A volunteer helper who is not a member of the club should not be left in sole charge of a group.

Specific Risks and Hazards on Individual Activities

It is recognized that on some expeditions there will be specific risks and hazards, which will be identified on a risk assessment identification sheet by the person planning to lead the activity.

Acceptance of the Risk Assessment Policy

All members of the club must read and accept this policy when they initially become members.

The policy will be reviewed annually and amendments, if any, will be circulated to all club members.

Members will retain one copy and return another signed copy to the club secretary.

Name of club

member _____

I have read the Risk Assessment and Child Protection policies.

I accept that there are hazards involved in the sport of kayaking and that the Risk Assessment Policy identifies procedures by which reasonable care has been taken to minimise the risks caused by these.

I will agree to follow the stated procedures of the club.

(Under18s must have read this policy and discussed it with their parents.)

*Signed _____ (Parent or guardian if under18)

* Please note that for under18s, this signed form will signify consent for day excursions.