

Outdoor Learning Handbook



**Queen Margaret
University**
EDINBURGH

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INTRODUCTION

Our QMU Outdoor Learning handbook was developed by the Outdoor Learning Team in August 2023. This handbook is subject to annual review and to immediate **revision in response to circumstances or events**. It was based on support from our partner provider, Big Wildlife, and in conjunction with the Health & Safety team at Queen Margaret University.

It contains information, policies and procedures relating to the running of safe and enjoyable Forest and Outdoor Learning sessions at various sites on or around Queen Margaret University. The relevant policies and procedures are in line with those provided through Queen Margaret University.

The Outdoor Learning team are responsible for coordinating, running and evaluation of the programmes. Our Outdoor Learning team are certified at Forest and Outdoor Learning (FOLA) Level 8.

SITE INFORMATION

Queen Margaret University

Main woodland site: Maggie's Wood located in the grounds of Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, EH21 6UU

Grid ref for site: NT 32864 71519

What three words: ///flops.wants.escape

Site management: Queen Margaret University - +44 (0)131 474 0000

Campus also has an extended Discovery trail and public shelter (The Howff) that is also covered by this handbook.

This handbook also covers activities for other sites that QMU leaders, students and associates may visit from time to time.

QMU has an ongoing partnership with Newhailes House and Gardens, Newhailes Road, Musselburgh EH21 6SY

Grid ref for site: NT 32661 72389

What three words: ///dangerously.fresh.small

Site management: National Trust Scotland - +44 131 665 1546

FOREST AND OUTDOOR LEARNING AT QUEEN MARGARET UNIVERSITY

Forest and Outdoor learning at Queen Margaret University aims to enrich our students' experience, connect to our communities and contribute to national and global concerns in education, sustainability, health and wellbeing.

Our programmes are rooted in our commitment to social justice, sustainability, health and wellbeing, creative approaches to curriculum and pedagogy, and making a positive impact in our communities. They create an opportunity for holistic development through a learner centred approach. The use of natural resources will be the basis for inspiration and development of the learners. We provide learning opportunities in all areas of development to provide a holistic experience including social and emotional intelligence, intuitive and spiritual intelligence as well as physical, cognitive and linguistic intelligences.

Whilst the learners will be self-directing their own learning, the input from the Outdoor Learning team in the form of reviewing and creating play catalysts, will enable the learners to transfer the skills learnt into both their personal and professional lives. This may be in the form of confidence that they are "good at something" or that the engineering of a den helps with mathematics. Practical skills will include knowledge of the natural environment, risk assessment and working with tools.

What we offer is one form of Outdoor Learning, based on the knowledge and experience of our Outdoor Learning Team and drawing on various traditions of access and enjoyment to the outdoors. This is not the only way to **facilitate** outdoor learning and we welcome dialogue from colleagues coming from different traditions **such as** conservation, sports **and** outdoor skills education.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Outdoor Learning team are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of our groups, along with risk assessing the site, daily conditions and all activities before and during the session. **We will also support colleagues and groups from across the university and our communities.**

Outdoor Learning leaders will hold a current and valid First Aid certificate: Outdoor First Aid course or a Paediatric First Aid qualification. It is the responsibility of individual members of staff to ensure that First Aid updates are booked in time to maintain their first aid currency.

Additional site users are required to follow the Queen Margaret University site user protocols **that are detailed in this handbook, summarised online on this link.**

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=008zKCsh_EepOj3VBAOL8oOyxGWTJvZFo4M0vZRXXdZURDIWQkVaUVhWMFVUNE5FVVJFVFIRWENBOC4u

We also provide a generic site risk assessment that may be useful for groups in developing their own suitable for their client group and organisational governance. This can be found online when booking the spaces.

Please help check that learners are wearing clothing and footwear appropriate for the weather and time of year and assist learners to recognise and avoid hazards as detailed in the risk assessment.

This handbook was drafted in 2023-24 by the following Outdoor Learning team members: Patrick Boxall, Katie Thomas, Chris Green and Cara Blaisdell. **The team is now growing with a range of colleagues of different background, experiences and areas of interest.**

Our approach is underpinned by research and practice knowledge of the field of outdoor learning, including our own research on creativity, social justice and outdoor learning. Our team will allow learners the freedom to explore and play without interruption whenever safely possible. **If a group is visiting and we are collaborating in delivery, it may be helpful for group leaders to have a planning meeting to ‘contract’ an approach to leadership appropriate to the group and the needs of the organisation. Experience and research show that time spent planning a shared approach to leadership of groups, particularly in the outdoor context, can have multiple benefits. This might take the form of agreeing approaches to supporting participants, the approach to ‘ground rules’ or balance of learner/leader led activities.**

RISK MANAGEMENT

Taking risks is an important part of learning and developing and QMU will provide a supportive environment in which learners can learn about risks, challenges and personal safety. By assessing risk dynamically with the learners, most activities can be carried out in a controlled way that mitigates the potential impact. As learners start to assess and mitigate risk for themselves, their self-confidence increases.

There are detailed Risk Assessments for planned activities that are likely to occur on our sites and activities. Ongoing Risk Assessment for the campus outdoor spaces will be undertaken by the Outdoor Leaders who will identify and manage hazards and risks whilst also identifying the benefits of each activity. All leaders who bring groups to QMU must complete their own risk assessment appropriate to their client groups and the needs of the governance of their organisation. For example: the needs of nursery age children are very different to older adults in many ways.

All Risk Assessment should begin BEFORE a group arrives on site with a review of the weather forecast. It is very rare for a session to be cancelled, but not unusual for control measures to be reviewed or other changes made such as moving site or modifying equipment. Weather forecasts that *may* lead to significant changes or even cancellation include:

1. Any weather warning from the Met office of Amber or Red. All Yellow warnings require review but may not require action depending on the forecast.
2. High winds
3. Significant snow or ice- this may mean that the journey to the campus is not justified even if risk is manageable on campus.

In general, it is extremely unusual for a bit of rain or cold to stop us going out to play! Please see note below on cancellation or postponement.

An important aspect of risk assessment is person clothing- please see section on Equipment below.

In the QMU Risk assessment there are two designated levels of activity:

1. Lower risk- that can be undertaken by most groups and leaders in most situations. All groups are welcome to do these activities without further evaluation.

Examples of lower risk activities include:

- Nature exploration
- Making using natural materials

- Free play and self-directed activity
- Physical movement activities- balancing, climbing, running
- Scavenger hunts and adventure
- Seasonal celebrations
- Studying wildlife
- Sensory activities
- Using string **for different purposes**

2. **Higher Risk- these activities are not permitted for all groups. Higher risk activities may be possible with additional risk assessment, qualifications, and evaluation by QMU staff.**

Higher risk activities that require additional assessment and evaluation before they are permitted include:

- a. **All use of sharp tools, including knives, loppers, secateurs, saws, axes, potato peelers and drills**
- b. **All fire and cooking activities, including use of fire trays, Kelly & Storm kettles, gas stoves and barbeques**
- c. **Woodland management that involves cutting or removing wood, plants or foliage**
- d. **Rope swings and similar**
- e. **Use of slacklines and other off ground devices or games**
- f. **All water-based activities**
- g. **Any other high risk activity not included above that is highlighted through the risk assessment**

The outdoor learning and campus service team and review the spaces regularly to be confident that they are fit for purpose for outdoor activities. However, outdoor environments can change quickly – either due to weather or an unforeseen event. To ensure the suitability of all spaces on the day, leaders should do an immediate site assessment on arrival. If anything has changed or is unexpected, please report it immediately to Reception. The team will support leaders to manage the hazard and take action or precautions to reduce the risk, for example a branch or tree may have moved or fallen over night and the environment changed. We can support with control measures if needed- in rare circumstances this may involve moving site.

The University requires all users to follow the standard operating procedures that we have outlined in this handbook. If leaders are coming from different traditions or approaches, we invite dialogue with the team about risk assessment but expect everyone to follow these guidelines as a basic approach to safe practice. All users should always be dynamically risk assessing the sessions. This takes place onsite throughout the session and involves professional judgements in response to changing situations – such as deterioration in the weather.

Steps to risk assessment:

1. Identify hazards
2. Decide who might be harmed and how
3. Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing control measures are adequate or whether more should be done
4. Review the assessment and revise if necessary

EQUIPMENT

Personal kit:

Good equipment starts with all members of the group having suitable clothing. This is essential for both safety and comfort. Advice on clothing and what to wear for all participants:

- Warm, waterproof shoes. Waterproof trainers, wellies or walking boots are good options. Paths on campus are good- so on a dry day individuals might be comfortable in lighter shoes.
- Warm clothes- even if the weather forecast is good bring at least one extra layer. It is often chilly in the woods. Wool and artificial fibres work better than cotton, especially in the wet. Several thin layers work much better than one thick heavy coat. Remember warm socks!
- Long sleeves and long trousers to protect against the cold, bugs and scratchy plants
- Waterproof coat and trousers if possible; long underwear/leggings under track suit bottoms are an option if it is cold.
- Hats and gloves are a good idea

Don't buy fancy expensive outdoor clothes: sport clothes work well, as does workwear, or just old stuff.

DO dress as though it is colder than it feels on your doorstep in the morning. A day outside can be demanding if you are not feeling cosy. Avoid shorts, even if it's a warm day.

Other things to bring:

- Water bottle, hot drinks in flasks/travel mugs, plus snack, treats, more food...stay fuelled up!
- Any personal medicines- especially if you have hay-fever, asthma, or diabetes.

Group Kit:

In most cases groups should bring the equipment they need for their activity. QMU does not have a kit store for general use.

The Education team does have a small amount of kit to support students or groups that are being co-led by the QMU outdoor staff. Please contact the outdoor learning team to discuss this if required. If kit is borrowed, it needs to be checked in and out from the outdoor learning store and returned dry and tidy. All equipment will be monitored regularly. Any breakages or wear and tear should be reported to the team.

DAILY OPERATING PROCEDURES

Before each session Leaders will:

- Obtain an up-to-date weather forecast.
- Check the first aid kit is well stocked.
- Leader will carry a mobile phone. QMU staff can check out and carry a walkie-talkie for communication with QMU Security Desk (contact First-aid / emergency response).
- Check any resources using the checklist and following the tool policy procedure (see appendix 3).

- Set up any equipment / experiences in the Outdoor Learning site.
- Carry out a daily risk assessment of the area and will take any necessary action to ensure the site is safe before use.

During the session:

- Upon arrival to the Outdoor Learning site, learners will make themselves known to the Leaders.
- Risks will be continually assessed, and appropriate action taken to reduce or remove any risks found.
- Learners are called using an agreed signal.
- Groups will be monitored depending on their needs / age / stage of the group. These will be specified within group planning / risk assessment documents.

At the end of the session:

- Work according to the ethos 'leave no trace' as much as is reasonably possible. Shelters should be taken down, imported materials need to be removed. All rubbish will always be removed. If artefacts have been found or made these may be taken off the site. Object made from natural materials can often be left on QMU sites- the groups leader can make this decision on the day.
- Group to return resources safely, to a central location, ready for returning to storage.
- The Outdoor Learning Leaders will check equipment back in - if any tools/resources are missing the area will be checked.
- The Outdoor Learning Leaders will carry out cleaning and maintenance of tools replacing if necessary and storing away safely.

FIRST AID

The Outdoor Learning Leaders will hold a current and valid First Aid certificate of at least a 2-day Outdoor First Aid course which includes Paediatric First Aid.

Visiting groups are likely to be able to rely on the campus First Aid team- accessed from the security team at reception. There is a full first aid kit and Defibrillator held there.

Groups may also provide their own first aid provision, particularly if engaging in Higher Risk as activities as listed above.

ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURE

1. Secure the safety of the group – recall learners to the Leader, who will take them to the main meeting point- this will vary depending on the site used.
2. Qualified First Aider called to check ABC, administer First Aid and, if necessary, call for further assistance from the emergency services / on campus First Aiders. This may be delegated to an assistant leader if possible. Provide the security team or operator with the following information:
 - I. an assessment of the casualty's injuries using a Casualty Report Card if required (appendix 2)
 - II. the location of the site including Grid Reference and/ or what three words reference
 - III. the time of the incident
3. Contact the QMU security team immediately of concerns, emergencies of unforeseen activities. They can be contacted in-person at reception within the main academic building or by phone on **07889075873**.

Ideally if the emergency services are to be contacted this will be done by the security/reception team, however in an emergency no time should be wasted so a group leader will make the decision about what is to be done when. If anyone has dialled 999 then the security/reception team must be informed as soon as possible.
4. Someone should meet the ambulance crew at the entrance to the main site and escort them to the casualty. This may be supported by the Security team- see number 3 above.
5. Record full details -
 - Accidents will be recorded on a QMU accident report form (found online)
 - Near-misses and other incidents will require a QMU incident report form (found online)
6. Accidents and incidents will be reported in accordance with Queen Margaret University policy.

MISSING PERSON PROCEDURE

Students on campus

- Registered students are responsible for following the instructions, including health and safety guidance, provided by the relevant member of staff

External groups on campus

- As per the Site User Agreement, a designated adult is responsible for completing a group register prior to the start of activities
- The designated adult, along with the external staff supporting the group, are responsible for ensuring that participants' whereabouts are monitored throughout their time on campus
- This includes attendance to toilets and returning to group

The following procedure should be instigated and followed by the Leader responsible for a group in the event any person goes missing from the Outdoor Learning group.

- Carry out established recall which signals that everyone should return to the caller. Conduct a head count to check that all other members of the group are present. A member of staff stays with the group at the Outdoor Learning site and await further instructions.
- Send any remaining staff to search the immediate area for an agreed length of time (e.g. 10 minutes). Arrange for them to return to the agreed meeting place at an agreed time. Searchers should stay within an area they know and be aware of their own safety.
- If the missing person is not found in the agreed length of time, organise a second search party if possible - again for an agreed length of time.
- If the missing person is not found by this second search, contact the police. The decision may be made to do this while the second search is in progress depending on circumstances. At this point, a decision will need to be made regarding the rest of the group.
- After the incident is over, complete a full report using the Incident Report Form found at [QMU Health & Safety Online](#)
- Our campus has 2 bodies of water: the large pond and small ornamental pond next to 1875
 - As such, Leaders should immediately check both sites in the event of a group member going missing, starting with the pond.
 - When doing activities near water the time before alarm is raised will be very short. With children immediate action is required to extend a search and campus services should be contacted using the walkie-talkie.
 - This will be especially relevant if activities are based at the Howff, which is located next to our large pond
 - A safety ring is available onsite at the large pond

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- The outdoor environment is an environment in which we are all entitled and we strongly believe that the experiences we will have there will linger in the memory for years to come.
- Students will be encouraged to discuss any required adaptations with staff. Leaders will make themselves aware of students with [Individual Learning Plans as per QMU policy](#) and discuss with students any adjustments needed to facilitate their participation in outdoor learning. Leaders will make themselves aware of, and follow, [QMU's Equality and Diversity policies](#).

SAFEGUARDING PROCEDURE

Site user agreement to be considered here.

Safeguarding will follow the QMU policy detailed in the [Health and Safety Policy](#)

BEHAVIOUR / ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Outdoor leaders will be aware of and follow QMU's [Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy](#)
Students and leaders will be aware of QMU's [Code of Conduct for Students](#)

CANCELLATION AND POSTPONEMENT

In the case of extreme weather and no suitable alternative venue being available Leaders may need to cancel sessions at short notice. We will use the Beaufort scale to identify around which level it's too windy for woodland (see appendix 4). Conditions such as thunderstorms or high winds would be deemed to be too dangerous. If caught out in lightning storms, we would evacuate using the established path and gather in a safe space as assessed by the group leader.

Heavy rain, snow or ice would not in themselves stop a session, unless the site is deemed too unsafe (such as flooding) or road conditions for arrival on site were deemed too hazardous. Where possible, these will be rescheduled.

Reasons for cancellation or postponement ***might*** include:

1. Any weather warning from the Met office of Amber or Red. All Yellow warnings require review but may not require action depending on the specific forecast.
2. High winds e.g. Beaufort force 6 and above (25mph+)
3. Significant snow or ice- this may mean that the journey to the campus is not justified even if risk is manageable on campus.

In the case of staff ill-health every effort will be made to seek replacement staff or to reschedule.

QMU Learners will be informed of cancellations via VLE announcements.

All external group leaders are invited to contact the team at QMU to review if there is any uncertainty in the forecast or circumstances on the planned day.

TOILETING

All participants will be directed to the toilets on QMU campus. There is no need to pee behind a tree at QMU!

Other sites we use regularly also have good toilet facilities e.g. the Newhailes stables area.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR HIGHER RISK ACTIVITIES

The following section is only applicable to groups that have had prior agreement to lead these activities with groups.

TOOLS

Use of tools is important in enabling learners to gain new skills, which they can then apply in purposeful situations. It also aids the development of self-confidence and independence, hand/eye coordination and motor skills. The Forest and Outdoor Learning ethos is to build on skills in small steps, once the learners and leaders have developed trust and the learners have shown they are ready, the leaders will introduce more advanced skills such as tool use and fire with the aim that everyone participating will do so safely, with as little risk to themselves and others as possible. We may use fixed blade knives, hand drills, loppers, bow saws, axes, pruning saws and mallets. We will always promote the safe use of knives and bladed tools, and all bladed tool use will always be accompanied by an Outdoor Leader (Forest School Level 3 or FOLA Level 8) with a ratio of 1:1 to begin with until their skill level increases. Tool use is covered in our QMU Outdoor Learning Risk Assessment.

The following guidelines are to be followed when using any tool:

- Prior to use, the Outdoor leader will visually check the tools for any damage or instability and check for sharpness.
- Only take tools that are suitable for the 'job of work'.
- Tools are transported to the outdoor site in a secure container. Sometimes learners are encouraged to help carry and transport resources safely to the session.
- Only the tools provided by QMU or associate organisations, managed by the Outdoor Leaders can be used by participants in sessions. No other tools, including penknives, should be used by participants. Leaders may on occasion bring additional tools on site for management tasks.
- How to use all tools will be demonstrated and then learners will be monitored under close supervision: learners are to work 1:1 with an Outdoor Leader when using tools until their skill level increases.
- Only the Outdoor Leader will decide if the individual learner is ready for a particular tool.
- Safe working distances of the tool - 2 arms-length must be in place around learners using tools and the tool area is clear of trip hazards.
- Tools are counted out and counted back.
- Tools should have safety guards placed back on as soon as not in use or keep them wrapped up to cover the blades and they should be returned to the designated area.
- Store tools together in the designated toolbox/bag – this demonstrates that they are for use with groups rather than as a personal item.
- All tools are cleaned, maintained and stored securely by the Outdoor Leader after each session.
- As a general rule participants should not wear a glove on the hand holding the tool - it makes the handle hard to grip safely. If it too cold to have bare hands, it is too cold to use tools that day. Subject to specific risk assessment, a leader may wear specialist work gloves for specific woodland management tasks.
- When travelling in a vehicle put tools in the boot or an area that isn't easily accessible by the driver or passengers.
- All tool use and carrying should comply with UK law e.g. avoid carrying fixed blade knives, or knives with lockable blades.

Saws – used for cutting wood with a diameter greater than a 2 pence piece

- Ensure the non sawing hand is away from the blade when sawing by using a barrier between the hand and the saw. E.g. Saw horse, thick stick, etc

- Use the saw to the side of you and not in front.
- Saw with easy relaxed strokes using the full length of the blade. Let the blade do the work – don't force it, especially if it sticks.
- Carry the frame at your side with the blade facing down, like carrying a handbag.
- Keep the blade covered when not in use and especially when transporting.
- Ensure the item to be cut is secured in a sawhorse or held by another helper.
- If used without a sawhorse, ensure a three-point stance is used by both Outdoor Leader and learner.
- Initially, the Outdoor Leader guides the saw and the learner follows, until the Outdoor Leader is confident that the learner is able to manage.

Loppers – used for cutting wood with a diameter smaller than a 2 pence piece - typically during coppicing.

- Always carry with blades closed (and locked if applicable) and with the handles at a horizontal position to the ground.
- When not in use leave with blades closed (and locked if applicable).
- Do not exceed the cutting capacity of the tool.
- Use away from your body.
- Keep both hands on the tool away from blades.

Knives – used to whittle small sticks, peel bark and cut string

- Gloves should not be worn as they can impede the dexterity of handling the wood.
- Keep a safe distance from other people (“Two arms and a tools distance” apart is the widely recognised safe working distance for tool use) and be aware of others whilst working.
- The three point stance to be used and ensure cutting away from the body.

Mallets - used to split wood, hammer pegs and sticks into ground and to drive axes and knives into wood

- Keep a safe distance from other people and ensure no-one is directly in front or behind during use.
- Ensure the handle is a good fit with the size of hand for firm grip.
- Check that the mallet is in good condition, that the handle is securely joining with no loose chips.

Axes - used for splitting wood and shaving rough wood.

- Blade moving away from the body, facing downwards.
- Keep wood between you and the axe at all times.
- If used for splitting hold parallel to front of the body, use mallet to drive blade into wood.
- Carry by placing cover on blade and holding handle just below blade next to leg with blade facing backwards.
- When passing, keep blade facing down, hold top of the tool and turn handle towards the other person.

Hand Drills - Drilling through thin pieces of wood

- Ensure the item to be drilled is secure on a solid wooden surface.
- Ensure the drill bit is correctly fitted.
- When carrying, hold handle next to leg with bit facing backwards.
- When passing, hold the wheel and offer the handle to other person.

FIRE SAFETY PROCEDURES

During Outdoor Learning sessions, a careful regard and respect of fire is reinforced. We model actions that encourage safe behaviour irrespective of whether a fire is actually lit. Our approach is that fire is used for special occasions and specific reasons rather than as a default activity. This approach is designed to keep sustainable practices and air pollution in mind when choosing to use fire. We use an alternative where possible, only burn wood from sustainable sources, and always carry in wood rather than use the deadwood (which is essential for ecosystems) from the setting itself.

As with all Outdoor Learning activities, lighting a fire is assessed as part of the daily operating procedure and it is possible that fire may not be suitable in some circumstances. The leader will assess the site for overhanging vegetation and clear forest floor debris to avoid fire spread. Fire trays will be used for all fires. Before fires are built, provision for putting out the fire is made with water at hand. It is the responsibility of the Forest and Outdoor Learning leader to ensure Edinburgh and the Lothian Fire Control (0131 228 2409) are informed on the day of the session before any campfires are lit and again at the end of the session to inform them that the fire has been safely put out. QMU security must be informed if fires are to be lit on campus.

Learners may individually practice fire lighting skills, with cotton wool and a fire striker. We discourage placing items within the fire circle unless under the direct request of the Leader. All learners will be given clear guidelines as to how to behave and move around the fire area. This includes sitting if they are within a safe distance from the fire, moving calmly if within two metres of the fire, moving calmly around the back of people sitting and never through the fire circle or in front of people and lighting matches and fire steels by striking them in a movement away from the body. Learners are to be positioned away from the direct line of smoke and given guidance on how to deal with smoke. Fire is never left unattended and the leader will ensure it is out using plenty of water before leaving the area. All fires must be fully extinguished and all traces removed at the end of the session.

Please note the following safety recommendations:

- do not run around the Fire Circle.
- walk around the outside of the Fire Circle to get to the other side.
- keep all seating a safe distance from the fire - this distance will depend on the group, the fire use and the weather conditions and will be determined by the Leader.
- only enter the inner Fire Circle when instructed by the Leader.
- long hair should be tied back, tassels and ties tucked away and scarves removed.
- flammable liquids are not to be used to light fires.

Kelly Kettle

The Leader may use this to heat water.

- Remove the protective cork/stopper from the kettle and fill the kettle with water. Do not replace the stopper/cork - the water spout must be free from ALL obstructions when the kettle is in use.
- Fill the base with material from the fire kit (Cotton wool and very small tinder). Add some kindling on top of the tinder.
- Light fire in base. Place the kettle securely on base.
- Face the hole(s) into the wind for extra draft if required or use a pump. Never blow into the Kelly Kettle.
- Insert additional fuel through the chimney top as required. For best results, feed fire until flames poke out of the chimney.
- When the water boils, use both hands to hold the wire handle at a 90° angle to the body of the Kettle (the wire handle will be cool to touch), then lift the Kettle clear of the base. Once clear of the base, the kettle can be carried around camp like a bucket if needs be. To pour, simply hold the handle in one hand and lift gently on the chain with your other hand.

Induction Hobs are available to use as an alternative to fire lighting when there is electricity is available. The outdoor shelter (howff) has sockets.

FOOD HYGIENE PROCEDURE

Why think about campfire and food safety?

There is a responsibility to keep learners safe while participating in campfire/ outdoor cooking activities.

High protein foods contain the nutrients and moisture required for the growth of bacteria and include raw meat, cooked meat, poultry, and dairy produce such as; ready-to-eat meals, cooked meats, stews, stock, eggs, cooked rice, prawns and other seafood.

The guidance is also relevant when preparing low-risk foods to which water is added. Bacteria are not able to multiply in dry food containing high concentrations of sugar, salt, acid (vinegar) and other preservatives. However, once water is added to dried foods such as milk powder or gravy granules, they become high-risk and must be used immediately or stored in refrigerator conditions (1°C to 4°C). This includes dried pasta, bread, gravy granules, flour, canned food, milk powder and cereals.

The following information summarises the best practice when planning, preparing and cooking food outdoors, particularly in relation to high-risk protein foods.

Control measures

External groups on campus: As per the Site User Agreement, a designated adult is responsible for completing a risk assessment relating to food hygiene when cooking outdoors is part of their group plan.

On-campus groups: When cooking outdoors is planned, at least one member of onsite staff will hold a current Food Hygiene Certificate and preferably the campfire cooking and safety course. All leaders will complete the QMU Level 2 certificate in Food Safety E-Learning module and follow standard food hygiene procedures as specified in the REHIS Elementary Food Hygiene Certificate documentation/guidelines.

Any leader who does not hold their Food Hygiene certificate must ensure that QMU Outdoor Leaders are aware of any food preparation and campfire cooking activities before they happen. Leaders of outdoor cooking need to ensure that risk assessment is done before any individual leads campfire cooking.

Before cooking

- Make sure that everyone (staff and participants) are made aware of a 48 hour symptom- and medication-free exclusion period following sickness and diarrhoea.
- Plastic gloves are not recommended unless:
 - (a) cuts on hands cannot be adequately covered with plasters
 - (b) the food handler has a skin infection
 - (c) the food handler has a known reaction to certain foods.
- Blue plasters are preferable to skin-coloured ones, as they can easily be identified in foods.
- Keep long hair tied back in a low ponytail or tucked into a hood.
- Have a hand washing station with preferably running water and eco-friendly soap. Wipes can be used as an alternative (although less effective and not environmentally sustainable). Hand gel should not be used as a substitute for hand washing.
- Check the site is not in close proximity to a source of sewage contamination. For example, manure spreading, soak-away or outflows into nearby streams and rivers.
- Learners are asked to state any food allergies and special dietary requirements they may have to the leader before the session.

Preparation and transportation

- Learners will prepare their own food to cook onsite and will be given food hygiene and safety guidelines to consider when doing so.

Preparing to cook

- Clean up as you go. In the outdoors, there is a greater chance that raw meat utensils or plates could become muddled with clean ones; there are also more people who may inadvertently pick up a dirty plate to use.
- Running cold water and pump eco-soap are recommended (avoid basins of shared water for handwashing). If these are not available, wipes are better than antibacterial gel.

During cooking

- Ensure sufficient fuel is available beside the fire to keep it at required size.
- There will be a Leader at each fire when learners are going to cook on the fire. The best position for cooking is a three-point stance to remain stable.
- Raw food will be cooked to a temperature of 75 degrees centigrade for cooking and 82 degrees if reheating food (use a temperature probe to check).
- In the more lengthy periods of time spent around a campfire and with rotation of pots on the fire, take care to notice the length of time foods have been off the heat and potentially cooling to below 63 degrees – the legal requirement for hot holding foods. Keep pans of cooked hot foods at 64 and above.
- Keep food covered at all times as the risk of physical contamination is much higher outdoors.
- Clean up the site well to ensure that pests are not attracted (leave no trace).

After cooking

- Learners take away their own utensils and plates for washing up.
- Where utensils/plates have been provided for learners, dishes to be washed as soon as possible on return using hot soapy water and avoid leaving uncovered in storage sheds to prevent contamination.

Appendix 1: Example clothing and footwear information sheet:

What to bring:

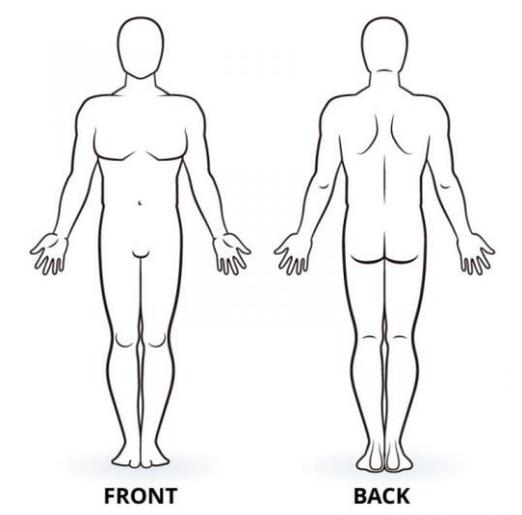
- Warm, waterproof shoes: wellies, walking boots or trail shoes
- Warm clothes: wool and man-made fibres work better than cotton, especially in the wet. Several thin layers work much better than one thick heavy coat. Remember warm socks!!
- Waterproof coat and trousers if possible; long underwear/leggings under track suit bottoms are an option if it is cold. Hats and gloves are a good idea.
- Water bottle, hot drinks in flasks/travel mugs, plus snack, treats, more food...stay fuelled up!
- Any personal medicines- especially if you have hay-fever, asthma, or diabetes.

Don't buy fancy expensive outdoor clothes: sport clothes work well, as does workwear, or just old stuff.

Do get some cheap wellies and thick socks or invest in some decent boots. Fabric trainers and 'cool' pumps etc get wet, cold and wrecked.

DO dress as though it is colder than it feels on your doorstep in the morning. A long day in the woods can be demanding if you are not feeling cosy.

Appendix 2: Casualty Card

Date :		Time:		First Aider:			
Name of injured person:							
Address:							
Date of birth:				Gender:			
Next of Kin name:				Next of kin contact:			
Activity/Location where incident took place:							
Time	Breathing Rate	Pulse Rate	Radial Pulse (Y/N)	AVPU	Casualty Response Level AVPU Alert – Verbal – Pain - Unresponsive		
							
Events Leading to incident:							
Any Treatment Given:							

Appendix 3: Tool/Fire Checklist

Date:								
Group:								
	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In	Out	In
Hand Drills								
Bow Saw								
Pruning Saw								
Axe								
Mallets								
Secateurs								
Loppers								
Knives								
Fire strikers								
Kelly Kettle								

Tool transport document:

To whom it may concern.

This person (insert your name and address) uses the following tools: sheath knife, bill hook, (insert tools) for carving and green woodworking, conservation work and for teaching these skills to children, young people and adults. This work is carried out in the following places: Queen Margaret University and Newhailes Estate. This person has been trained and is qualified in the safe use of tools.

Appendix 4: Beaufort Scale

Scale	Description	Miles Per Hour	Effects	Risk
0	Calm	0-1	smoke rises	
1	Light air	1-3	Smoke drifts	
2	Light breeze	4-7	Leaves rustle	
3	Gentle breeze	8-12	Twigs move	
4	Moderate breeze	13-18	Leaves and small branches sway	
5	Fresh breeze	18-24	Small trees sway	
6	Strong breeze	25-31	Large branches sway	
7	Moderate gale	32-38	Whole trees in motion	
8	Fresh gale	39-46	Twigs break off trees	
9	Strong gale	47-55	Branches break off trees	
10	Whole gale	56-64	Trees uprooted	
11	Storm	65-74	Widespread damage	
12	Hurricane	75+	Devastation	

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