



11 - Planning at Thurston for Extreme Situations

Types of Extreme Situation

Thurston OEC is 2.5 miles from Coniston Village which has a range of emergency facilities including a Fire Service and Mountain Rescue base. There is a neighbouring local outdoor education centre, Low Bank Ground, and there is provision for either centre to provide basic food and shelter should one of the centres need to evacuate a group.

Contingency planning needs to be in place for the following situations:

1. Staff unable to get into the Centre because of snow, floods, etc.
2. The group unable to travel home because of snow, floods, etc.
3. The group needing to evacuate the Centre because of fire or damage to the buildings.
4. Loss of electricity, heating or water for a prolonged period during the visit.
5. Large scale sickness in the group.

1. Staff Unable to Get into the Centre.

All staff are happy to adapt their normal work to meet the basic needs of the group in the centre should the occasion arise.

If **Centre Instructional Staff** are having difficulty getting to the centre:

- Phone the Head of Centre for advice - it may be possible to share transport or be collected by a centre vehicle.
- Make all reasonable attempts to get in but do not jeopardise your own safety.
- If instructional staff are unable to make it to the centre, visiting leaders will be contacted by the Head of Centre or another member of Thurston instructional staff.
- The Head of Centre or visiting leader should make contact with the Head Teacher or organisation of the visiting group where appropriate and keep them informed.
- Maintain contact with the centre and keep group updated on changing situations e.g. snow, floods, road closures. Pass on any information from the media that may be helpful to the group.

Visiting Staff need to:

- Ensure safety of the group
- If Centre staff have not been in touch, phone the Head of Centre on the numbers provided. They will advise on what to do.

- Be aware that groups may have mobile phones. It may be prudent to collect phones or inform the group what information is to be divulged.

2. Group Unable to Travel Home.

Again the key considerations are looking after the group in terms of food and accommodation and keeping the Head Teacher / organisation informed of the situation and liaising with the coach company or other means of transport.

If appropriate the Head of Centre will stay overnight with the visiting group at the centre and other staff will be asked to adapt their work patterns and hours to meet the needs of the group.

3. The Group Needing to Evacuate the Building.

Evacuation will be carried out in accordance with the centre Fire Alarm Procedure.

- Take a head count and roll call
- If anyone is missing, assess the situation and carry out a search if safe to do so.
- If result of fire, phone the Fire Service
- Contact the Head of Centre if not on site.
- If for any reason the building is unfit to sleep in and it is necessary to find shelter/further assistance for the group, contact will be made with the neighbouring outdoor education centre - Low Bank Ground 41314.

4. Loss of Electricity, Heating and Water

- In case of loss of electricity, use the mobile phone to report the fault. Phone 0800 195 4141 and follow instructions.
- The emergency lights should stay on for a further 2 hours.
- Note - the heating will be affected - prepare.
- The children will have torches, get them to share, economise use, use on rotation.
- In the past the problem has never lasted longer than 8 hours.
- Phone Head of Centre if not on site, to get advice.
- Check if power cut is only affecting Thurston or also the local area. Ring other centres, Thurston staff or local businesses to find out.
- Liaise with Head of Centre to decide a plan.
- Once the batteries are run down on the Emergency Lighting the fire alarm system will go off line. You will have to phone the Fire Service if required.
- There is a separate boiler in the Campsite Shower Block.
- Wood burner in the Barn and Sleeping Bags available.

5. Large Scale Sickness.

- In the case of large scale sickness, inform the Head of Centre and senior staff.
- Contact the local doctor and explain symptoms.
- Isolate, put to bed or make arrangements to evacuate in liaison with the above.

All extreme situations are individual and different in nature. It can be difficult to plan for or follow a set plan. The senior member of staff takes the lead role. Seek as much advice as possible and take the common sense approach.