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| **Activity:** | Climbing and Abseiling  (Including Artificial and Natural Rock Surfaces and Bouldering) | **Location:** | Indoor (Artificial Wall), e.g., Climbing Centre  Outdoor (Natural Wall), e.g., The Roaches | **Last review date:** | April 2023 | **Produced by:** | Alex Windows (Section Leader) |
| **Next review date:** | December 2025 | **Quality Assured by:** |  |

* POR 9.34 Climbing - <https://www.scouts.org.uk/por/9-activities/#9.34>
* TSA Climbing and Abseiling Guidance - <https://www.scouts.org.uk/volunteers/running-your-section/programme-guidance/general-activity-guidance/roped-activities/climbing-and-abseiling/>
* TSA Activity Helmets Guidance - <https://www.scouts.org.uk/volunteers/running-your-section/programme-guidance/general-activity-guidance/activity-helmets/>

**Statements below highlighted in bold are extracted from POR for supporting factsheets**, the wording of some statements may have been altered from the original.

| **What are the hazards?** | **What are the risks?** | **Who is most at risk?** | **What control measures will be put in place?** |
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| **Helmets** | Damage  Incorrect Fitting  Lack of protection | Climbers | * **All helmets must be UKCA / EN / CE marked to the appropriate standard for the activity.** * **Any of the following signs should require the retirement of a helmet:** * **Cracks, damage, or deformation of any component.** * **Ultra-violet degradation (evidence through fading/discolouring)** * **Contamination such as chemicals.** * **Excessive wear.** * **Loose, damaged, or missing rivets/attachment points where straps etc connect to the shell of the helmet.** * **Broken or missing locking mechanisms.** * **All straps and padding should be checked for the security of fixing to the shell.** * **If the helmet type has a headband this should not slip, or work lose.** * **The adjustment system must function correctly / as manufactured.** * **Check the helmet does not have stickers or paint on the shell or straps (unless fitted or approved by the manufacturer)** * **A helmet should be retired from use if it has sustained an impact. This could include an impact with an object, dropping, crushing or has been suspected of sustaining such forces. In case of doubt contact the equipment manufacturers.** * **The helmet should be appropriate / designed for / safe for the intended activity.** * **Helmets should always be fitted in line with the manufacturer’s guidance.** * **Basic principles for helmet fitting:** * **The helmet should protect the whole head so should not sit too far forward or too far back leaving part of the head exposed. The front of the helmet should sit over the middle of the forehead just above the eyebrows.** * **The adjustment system/ cradle or padding should fit snuggly on the head holding the helmet in place, so it does not move freely on the head in any direction when the chin strap is undone. One way to check this is to fit the helmet to the head and leave the chin strap lose. Move the head around looking up and down left and right etc. if the helmet moves fitting will need adjustment.** * **The chin strap should fit snugly but should not restrict talking. If there is a tail on the chin strap this should be threaded or tucked away to reduce the risk of it catching or snagging.** * **Some hairstyles and hair types mean it can be more difficult to get a comfortable correct fit. Larger helmets may be needed and/ or the use of a hair net or skull cap under the helmet may be required. If an item such as a skull cap is worn under the helmet it is important to check that the helmet still fits securely on the head and does not slip, slide, or move on the skull cap etc.** |
| **Rocks and Surfaces** | Injuries | All | * Instructors / Leaders should check the area is clear of obvious trip hazards before commencing the activity. Any movable hazards to be moved. * All participants must wear suitable footwear for the terrain, as advised by leaders. * Instructors /leaders should check slippery areas, especially after rain and brief participants about hazardous areas should they exist. * Check the area for hazardous rocks and sharp objects before climbing. * Consider moving to a different climb if dangerous rocks or surfaces are unavoidable. |
| **Falling from height** | Broken Bones, Bleeding, Concussion | Climber | * All Participants must wear correctly fitted helmets and harnesses. * Helmets and harnesses must be checked by Leaders before commencing climbing. * Climbers must be checked to ensure they are tied in or clipped on correctly before climbing. * Climbs should be rigged and checked by experienced instructors with the appropriate level of permit. * If participants are belaying; another person could hold the ‘dead rope’ to act as a fail-safe, especially for young or inexperienced belayers. |
| **Equipment** | failure of equipment – Falls from heights, injuries, | Climber / Belayer | * **All climbing equipment should be used following the manufacturer’s guidelines.** * **Where it is not possible to follow the manufacturer’s guidelines a backup/redundancy must be built into this element of the setup.** * **The storing, maintenance and replacement of all climbing equipment should follow the manufacturer’s guidelines.** * Thorough checks of equipment should be carried out, including a visual check before each use. * Care to be taken when rigging the climbs, especially near sharp rocks. Rope protectors could be used where required. * Participants must only use harnesses suitable for their size and weight. * Load weighting of climbing equipment to be checked. * Equipment must only be checked by a competent Instructor / Leader with the appropriate level of permit. |
| **Falling Rocks and Objects** | Injury Concussion | Climber / Belayer | * **When climbing or abseiling on natural features, a climbing helmet must always be worn.** * All participants are to wear correctly fitted helmets while near the rock face. * Instructors / Leaders should check for loose rocks or other objects that could fall during the activity. Change the climbing venue if it is deemed too dangerous. * Any non-climbers should be standing away from the climbing areas. * The area below abseiling should be kept clear, other than the belayer. * Persons abseiling to be lowered in a controlled manner. * Spectators should keep clear when a climber is abseiling. |
| **Clothing** | Movement  Comfort | Persons on/in the water | * Persons taking part in activities must wear appropriate and suitable clothing, including footwear, for the activity which they are doing and the weather they may face. * Leaders should advise parents/carers of the clothing young people should wear and bring a change of clothing as required. |
| **Behaviour and Supervision** | Getting Lost  Inappropriate behaviour | Young People | * Behavioural expectations of all persons involved in the activity should be briefed before the activity commences by a leader/instructor. * Clear responsibilities are to be outlined in the briefing to Leaders and Participants. * An adult leader should explain specific rules relating to the event, location or activity before young people participate. * Young people must not be allowed to play fight. * The youngest or most inexperienced people should be closely supervised. |
| **Public and other users** | Trespass.  Disruption. | Young People. | * Respect other people and when near other climbers or members of the public, maintain a suitable level of noise. * Take care around private residences to respect others’ privacy and not intrude on land or be too loud. |
| **Exertion** | Dehydration  Hunger  Exhaustion | Young People. | * Young people should be advised to tell a leader if they are feeling unwell or have any problems. * Leaders should remain extra vigilant of those who may not have eaten or been drinking sufficiently, as appropriate. |
| **Weather** | Discomfort.  Getting lost/stranded. | All | * Leaders should obtain a comprehensive suitable weather forecast, before embarking. Equipment, route, or advice should be adjusted as required. * Leaders should monitor the weather forecast in advance and during the activity - if heavy rain is forecast then an alternative plan could be adopted. |
| **Hot Weather** | Dehydration.  Exhaustion.  Heat/Sunstroke.  Sun Burn. | Young People. | * Adult leaders should be available to spot the signs of dehydration and exhaustion. * Leaders should bring additional water to activities and provide a shaded area. * Young people should put on sun protection as required, as advised by leaders. They must apply their own sun protection or be aided by another young person. * Sun protection should not be supplied or applied by an adult. * Young people should bring their own sun protection (and parents advised to do so well before the activity) to avoid any allergic reactions – these should not be provided by leaders. |
| **Cold Weather** | Hypothermia.  Getting Wet.  Poor Visibility. | Young People. | * Young people should wear an appropriate level of clothing depending on the weather conditions, as advised by leaders. Make sure everyone knows what kit works to keep them warm and dry. * Leaders should assess the weather conditions before undertaking and during the activity and decide if the event should take place or continue. * Hot drinks and soup could be considered to help keep you warm, hydrated and keep energy levels up. * Consider the effect of the cold and damp on leaders too, as they are overseeing the safety of others. Make sure that the opportunity to get warm and dry is available. Ensure rest periods are reviewed so that everyone is fit to do what is required of them. * Have lighting in your location and use torches or head torches to carry out your activities safely. |
| **Allergies** | Intolerances  Allergic reaction  Anaphylaxis | Young People. | * Details of allergies will be collected by leaders and stored securely. * Should members be likely to encounter allergens, additional precautions should be taken to avoid or remove the allergen. * Members susceptible to vegetative allergens should wear appropriate clothing to avoid contact. * Ensure any medication is readily available and it can be administered if it is required, especially for those susceptible to allergens. * Leaders should also pay attention to the pollen count. If this is high, hay fever sufferers may advise to wear wraparound sunglasses and bring any required medications. |
| **Medication** | Medical Conditions. | Young People. | * All medication, apart from those needed for emergencies, should be handed to leaders, who should be briefed on when and how they are needed to be taken. * Emergency medicines, particularly inhalers, can be kept on a young person or handed to a leader who will remain close by. * If required, additional measures should be put in place to ensure medication can be administered. * Ensure any medication is readily available and it can be administered as required. |
| **Emergencies** | Unable to get help or locate. | All. | * Appropriate consent and personal information, including medical information, should be carried for all young people, including young leaders. * **Communication** - Every group should have an effective means of emergency communication with other groups, home contact (in touch) and emergency services. * **Authorisation/Inform** – send the T0 form to DC and GSL. * **Home Contact** (in touch) - Could be more than one person. Must be available ‘around the clock’ and they should be prepared to pass messages, including emergency communications, on from leaders to parents and vice versa, as well as other appropriate authorities. |