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Introduction

Welcome to our very popular Canoeing Activity!

This manual will help you to familiarise yourself with the equipment we use at Canoeing and how we ensure the activity is safe and fun for all campers.

As instructors, it is important that we complete the required training with an outside assessor such as the Irish Canoe Union before using the course with a group of campers. We will also look at how we use therapeutic recreation at canoeing in order to comply with the philosophy and mission of Barretstown. Before we go into detail on therapeutic recreation we must first understand about comfort zones.

Barretstown uses a 'challenge by choice' principle in all the activities we run at camp. This means that campers will never be pushed into something or forced into doing an activity/exercise which they feel strongly about not doing. They will choose their own level of participation and challenge.

Comfort Zones

Each individual has three levels of comfort which we call 'zones' at camp; a comfort zone, a stretch zone and a panic zone. You are in your comfort zone when you are doing the things you love i.e.



reading, listening to music, watching TV etc. This is a zone you enjoy being in. You enjoy both the activity you are doing and the environment you are doing it in.

The next zone is known as your 'stretch zone'. This is a zone where you feel you are being challenged in some way. You are not as comfortable as you were in your comfort zone but you still feel like you can cope with where you are and carry on doing what you are doing. Each person's stretch zone is different because we all have different levels of comfort. What seems like a challenge to one person may be no problem to the other. Some people have a fear of flying whereas others are quite comfortable in an aeroplane. This is the zone we want our campers to be in. We want them to challenge themselves and put themselves in their stretch zone. This is the zone where you learn that you can overcome challenges, be successful and feel good about yourself. This is the zone where self-esteem grows and campers realise their potential. The same applies to adults.

The final zone is the 'panic zone'. This zone is the last place we want anyone to be in at camp. Camp is a safe, fun and positive environment. When you find yourself in your panic zone you feel scared, unsure about what is going on. You question yourself and the people around you. You become stressed out and you find yourself making quick decisions to get yourself back to your comfort zone. **At no point throughout the duration of camp should campers or staff find themselves in their panic zone.**

By ensuring campers choose their own level of challenge we avoid placing them in their panic zone. They decide their level of participation and their level of challenge depending on their own level of comfort. As staff, we then try to help them overcome the challenges they have set for themselves. We do this by creating a safe and fun activity and, recognising the individual success which each camper obtains through taking part in an activity at some level.

As well as the physical challenge of putting on the PPE, and being in a boat in a lake there is a huge emotional challenge for campers to overcome also. The feeling of being nervous, anxious, unsafe and unsure of what is going on is a huge challenge to overcome. The campers are placing total trust in both the instructors and the equipment therefore it is important to be empathetic towards them. We can do this by remembering a time when we were in our stretch zone and what it felt like. What would have made us more comfortable at the time? Between doing this and keeping communication open between the instructor and the camper we can ensure that emotional challenges are overcome.



General Operating Procedures

1. The canoeing programme is designed for children ages 7 and up and each participant must be old enough to understand the safety rules and fit the PPE. Children younger than 7 may participate in canoeing if they are in a boat with their parent/guardian during family camp and fit the PPE.
2. A ratio of 2 qualified instructors for each group of 16 campers will be maintained while at canoeing. There will be a certified instructor on the water at all times, as well as a designated “land staff”. If any children are not taking part for whatever reasons then there will be at least 2 additional staff members on shore with them at all times to maintain Barretstown’s 2-adult policy. It is the responsibility of the land staff to be monitoring the boats from land, helping campers in and out of boats, and to have the walkie talkie in case of emergencies.
3. Staff and campers alike must be orientated to the safety and procedures before they go onto the water
4. Helmets are to be worn at all times by all participants. Helmets are provided to all participants.
5. PFDs (Personal Floating devices) must be worn by all participants. These are provided as part of the introduction to the activity, and are checked that they fit the camper before they go out on the water.
6. The summer staff are trained in basic canoeing skills which include entering and exiting a canoe, how to hold a paddle, the correct ways to wear PPE, what to do in case of a boat capsizing and basic strokes (forward, backward, how to turn and stop). This is done during staff orientation. A brief overview is given prior to each canoeing session to reinforce the procedures.
7. If there is a camper with physical limitations, the canoeing leaders will be instructed and assisted by members of the med shed team as to how to adapt the programme (example: sitting on the bottom of the boat, extra padding, a staff paddler in the boat etc)
8. Canoers will be equipped with helmets and PFDs, and are asked to wear closed toed shoes.
9. All canoes are put away at the end of an activity block, and locked in the boat house. Canoes are never left accessible without staff supervision.
10. Canoes are checked with regards to their maintenance at the end of each camp session, along with all equipment (PFDs, helmets, paddles). Any maintenance issues will be recorded on a maintenance request form and submitted. If the equipment cannot be fixed satisfactorily, then new equipment will be sourced. At the end of each camp season, canoeing equipment is



inventoried and its condition recorded. Equipment will be replaced when deemed unfit for use by certified staff and/or in accordance with manufacturers guidelines.

11. All boats are logged by the land staff prior to their going on the water, and all persons in the boat are noted. They are logged back in when they return to shore. These logs are submitted to the activities coordinator at the end of each camp session.
12. At all times, a certified Irish Canoe Union staff member must be present when anyone is on the water.
13. During family camps adult groups participating in the canoeing activity are required to adhere to all the mentioned safety regulations. All adults are orientated to the safety equipment and are required to wear PPE to participate in the activity.

Supervision

1. A qualified instructor with the appropriate training and certification must facilitate the canoeing programme. He/She should have previous experience leading canoeing programmes for children, ideally those with special needs. They must hold an ICU Instructor Level 1 Certificate, or else hold an ICU Level 3 Proficiency Certificate or be site trained by a representative of the ICU each year at Barretstown. He/She must be at least 18 years of age. The canoeing activity leader(s) is responsible for supervising the programme in accordance with Barretstown and ICU policies and guidelines.
2. Canoeing takes place in groups of no more than 16 campers. Typically, canoeing will take place as activity groups, therefore 8 groups will independently go up to the lake at separate times. All campers are given the opportunity to go out on the water if they choose.
3. All activity groups will be accompanied by Cara's who will support and supervise campers during the Canoeing Activity. An activity group of 16 children will typically have up to 7 Cara's attached for support and supervision.
4. A minimum of 3 Cara's must be with each activity group at all times
5. A Barretstown Nurse must be on call by walkie talkie at all times during activities
6. A member of the Barretstown medical team must be on-call by walkie talkie at all times during canoeing activity blocks.



Conduct

1. The canoeing programme is designed for children for ages 7 and up or accompanied by a parent. Each participant must be old enough to understand the safety rules and operating procedures, and all safety procedures must be translated into all languages of participants before they go onto the water. Each participant must fit the PPE.
2. Staff are to be notified of any conditions concerning the ability and behaviour of the participants prior to the groups arrival.
3. All campers will be introduced to the programme rules prior to going onto the water.

Safety Regulations

1. Helmets must be worn at all times by all participants.
2. PFDs must be worn at all times by all participants.
3. Campers must be accompanied by a Camp Staff at all times at the lake.
4. Campers and staff are to wear closed toed shoes at the waterfront.
5. A maximum of 16 participants can ride at one time.
6. Only staff certified in manual handling are allowed to carry boats to and from the boathouse.
7. There are 3 whistle signals when boats are on the water. 1 whistle blow signifies that all boats are to stop paddling and pay attention to the instructor on the water; 2 whistle blows signifies that a boat has capsized and all boats are to stop paddling while the instructor focuses their attention on the capsized boat; 3 whistle blows signifies it is time for all boats to return to shore.
8. If a boat capsizes, participants are asked to stand up and walk to shore if they are able. If they are unable, they are asked to hold onto the overturned boat until a staff member helps them out of the water. Only the canoeing instructor will right and empty the capsized canoe. If campers have restricted mobility and there is a chance they would not be able to walk to shore, there will be a staff member in their boat during the activity to minimize the chance of the boat accidentally capsizing.



9. Canoeing will not run if there is inclement weather.
10. Boats must stay on the left hand lake. Boats may go under the bridge to the right hand lake if instructed, led and accompanied by the canoeing activity leader.
11. Canoeists must be conscious of those participating in a fishing activity; share the lake and avoid the fishing shores.

Safety Rules

1. Helmets and PFDs must be worn at all times when in a canoe and on the water; closed toed shoes must be worn at the lake
2. A ratio of 2:16 certified activity leader to campers must be maintained on the water, with 1 designated land staff at all times there are boats on the water.
3. There are only 2 or 3 participants allowed in each canoe, depending on the number of seats.
4. A qualified instructor will inspect and double check all PPE before boats go onto the water.
5. Participants must enter the boat from the shore, using their paddle for balance and walk to the stern of the boat. 1 camper will be loaded at a time. Once all campers are in the boat, 2 staff training in manual handling will push the boat off the shore.
6. There is no standing in boats, unless as part of an activity when boats are rafted together.
7. There is no splashing. Canoeing is a dry sport at Barretstown.
8. All whistle signals are to be adhered to at all times.
9. Please stay on the left hand lake at all times unless led by a staff member under the bridge.
10. If fishing is going on, please avoid the fishing shores and be aware of where others are casting.

Controlled Access

1. No one is permitted to go onto the water without an ICU certified staff member present and a designated land staff; this includes other staff and volunteers.
2. Campers are not permitted at the lake without staff present.

Safety Orientation

Canoeing Activity Leader: canoeing activity leaders must hold a certification from the Irish Canoe Union. If they hold an equivalent certificate from another governing body, they must be site certified by a representative of the ICU at Barretstown before facilitating the activity.



Summer staff and volunteers: Prior to everyone going on the water the canoeing activity leaders will go over the rules of the lake, with demonstrations.

Campers: Prior to everyone going on the water the canoeing activity leaders will go over the rules of the lake, with demonstrations, and ensure they are translated effectively.

Emergency procedures

Fire Alarm

When you hear the fire alarm at the lake you must:

1. Ensure all campers are safely off the lake and out of the boats. Safely close down the activity area.
2. Caras escort the group to the assembly point. Canoe instructor's ensure boats are locked up before leaving the lake. (pad lock and chain)
3. When arriving at the front of the castle please notify the support team member taking attendance that two of your team has stayed back at the lake for safety reasons.
4. Line up accordingly and await further instructions from the support team.

Medical Emergency

In the event of a medical emergency you should;

1. Contact the medical centre immediately
2. Remove the rest of the group if possible to the dining hall area if necessary.
3. Remain calm and wait for medical help to arrive.

Missing Camper

When you hear a call over the walkie talkie that 'the red folder has gone missing' you must;

1. Safely close down the activity area.
2. Volunteer Cara's escort the group to the dining hall. Full time staff meet at the cottage coordinators office.
3. Check in with the support team and await further instructions



Missing Person at the Waterfront

1. If it is suspected that the person has gone missing at the waterfront, Camp Director/Assistant Camp Director will specify that on the walkie talkie
2. 2 support team members will be at the lake to start foot sweeps on the FARMYARD side of the lake
3. The next pair to the lake will be begin sweeping at the bridge
4. Both lines work their way into the centre of the lake
5. Additional pairs will join onto either line
6. All staff will follow the direction of the line leader (person closest to the shore) who will instruct when to sweep, pivot etc.
7. Once the lines meet each other they will pivot and go back over the length of the lake
8. Any extra staff will start a line at the bridge and sweep the lake around the boat.

Weather Condition Emergencies

1. Heavy rain: Go to shore as quickly as possible; seek shelter. If there is no thunder or lightening, staff can tie up boats together and onto a deck.
2. High Winds: Go to shore as quickly as possible; seek shelter. If there is no thunder or lightening, staff can tie up boats together and onto a deck.
3. Thunder and Lightning: Go to shore as quickly as possible; seek shelter. Staff will use judgement as to whether it is safe to be outside tying up boats together and onto a deck.

General Duties for All Staff at Canoeing

1. Be on time
2. Help maintain equipment
3. Storing paddles, PFDs and helmets in a tidy manner; report any broken or unsafe equipment to the canoeing activity leaders
4. Professional demeanour, proper attire.
5. Courteous to others.
6. Everything has a place, so please find a home for whatever may be lying around out of place.
7. Ensure boathouse is locked when leaving, and all that boats are stored and secured properly.
8. Help others to understand these policies.



Introduction and procedures for Staff to explain to campers

Welcome to canoeing

My name is _____ and _____

At Barretstown canoeing is a dry sport.

We have 4 simple guidelines to help us stay dry

- ❖ No rocking the boat
- ❖ No crashing the boat
- ❖ No standing up in the boat (unless activities leader say when)
- ❖ No paddle splashing

We have 3 whistle signals to help us communicate on the water:

One blow – we want your attention (we have something important to say)

Two blows – a boat has capsized.

The boat that has capsized = just walk out onto shore/ we will assist you

Other boats please give them space (stay away)

Three blows – Our session has ended, please return to shore

Equipment

Lifejackets

We have two styles of Lifejackets

- ❖ Zip up: the zip goes to the front
- ❖ Buckles: lifejackets goes over the head. Buckles go the front

Helmets

There are blue and red helmets inside please get one.

On your way out grab a paddle

Go to a Cara and they will check your equipment for you. Then make a circle on the grass.



How to hold a paddle

- Whatever hand you are comfortable with, hold the paddle straight out in front of you (as demonstrated)
- Place the other hand loosely towards the bottom of the paddle
- If paddle is on the right side of the boat, your right hand is on the bottom.
- If paddle is on the left side of the boat, your left hand is on the bottom.

Forward paddle

Keep blade flat

- Put the paddle out in front and pull it behind you

Backwards paddle/also to stop

- Put the paddle behind you and push it forward.

Turning

- Person in front paddles forward on one side
- Person in the back paddles backwards on the other side
- If you want to turn on the right the person in the back paddles backwards on the right (vice versa for left)

How to get in and out of the boat correctly and safely

- You must have an adult sitting on the front of the canoe first
- Rest your paddle on top of the canoe and slide it along to balance yourself.
- Stay down low and in the middle of the boats
- One at a time
- Tallest person first, next tallest person, smallest at the front
- Sit in the middle of the sit.

End of session

- After 3 whistles ,
- Paddle back to shore
- Wait for an adult ,



- Get out the same way as you got in.