

SUTTON GRAMMAR

YEAR 8 OUTDOOR CHALLENGE



PARTICIPANTS' MEETING TO FORM TEAMS

We will arrange a meeting in the drama studio **at the start of lunchtime** on a date to be confirmed. Please go straight there so that we can make a start, and then there will be plenty of time for you to get/eat food afterwards. Please don't go and queue up for food first, or you'll be keeping everyone waiting.

You will be in a team of 4 or 5 for the Masterchef competition, and then these teams will be combined in 3 larger groups which will sleep in the same hut and travel in the same minibus. So if you cannot attend the meeting/are not in school that day, please sort a team out with friends who are also on the trip. Most teams will be groups of 4 with a few 5s. We will also be going through the programme and answering any questions.

DEPARTURE

Arrive at school at 8.00 a.m on Monday 24th June, mustering in the back car park (Greyhound Road entrance) next to the minibuses and van.

Please bring a packed lunch so that we can get settled into the site before worrying about food. We will stop at a services on the way, so you could bring money for something there if you prefer.

RETURN

We aim to be back at school at 6 p.m. on Friday 28th June. It might be earlier or later, due to weather, traffic, etc. We will update parents with our estimated time of arrival when we leave the campsite, and update you on the way back. Please be available to pick up as early as 5pm if needed.

SLEEPING

For most of the week, you'll be sleeping in huts (or on the last night, if you'd like to, in a Woodland Bivouac for the Brave and Hardy at Botany Bay Activity Centre, Botany Bay, Trelleck Road, Tintern, Chepstow, NP16 6SN. On Monday night, you'll be in the grounds of Lydbrook YHA,

STAFF

Outspark staff Jason, Martin and Dave will be assisted by school staff and young leaders from SGS. Jason is a former teacher at the school who has run over 100 expeditions at SGS. He's also a leading philosopher-in-schools (www.thephilosophyman.com) and specialist in

the education of very bright students, including through online classes at www.p4he.org.

FOOD

The food is plentiful and of a good standard, so don't feel you need to bring lots of snacks and sweets. No fizzy drinks whatsoever please. We cater for all sorts of special diets. If you don't like what's on offer for one particular meal, or you're still hungry, always ask, but it's also a good opportunity to be adventurous and try stuff you don't normally eat.

ACTIVITIES

The running order may be different, but here is a list of some of the headline activities during the week. It's all subject to weather and the programme can change in response to all sorts of things, but here's a flavour. Please note that in addition to our own qualified staff, we use other Adventurous Activities Licensing Authority approved companies for the caving, climbing, mountain biking and canoeing who have appropriate expertise for each activity. So although the activities are adventurous and you can never guarantee that you won't, for example, fall off your bike and get a graze, there are experts on hand to instruct you and keep you safe. All appropriate safety equipment will be provided – buoyancy aids, helmets etc.

CANOE BIVOUAC

On our first evening, you paddle three to a canoe down the Wye from Kerne Bridge, then use the canoes, paddles and tarps to construct bivouacs in which you'll spend the night in the grounds of YHA Lydbrook on the banks of the river. In the morning, paddle on to the final destination at Biblins, passing through the rapids (suitable for novices but a fun ride) at Symonds Yat.

It will save you time when we get to the site if you already have the kit you will need to take you on this activity together. This will go into the van and be waiting for you at the overnight camp. See the kitlist.

HILLWALKING

There's usually a choice of two walks: Sugarloaf, which is a charismatic hill with a distinctive summit commanding great views (though populated by sheep that attempt to extort food from tourists); or Pen-y-Fan, a classic but challenging walk where you might bump into members of the SAS doing the famous "Fan Dance", a gruelling 24km challenge.

For Pen-y-Fan, walking boots, NOT WALKING SHOES are essential, and for Sugarloaf they are much preferred. The key thing is ankle support: rugged looking trainers that do not provide ankle support are not much better than ordinary trainers. **No boots and you can't go to Pen-y-Fan.** They don't need to be expensive and we might be able to get some discarded by a previous participant if you give us notice.

A good waterproof jacket and waterproof trousers are especially important for this day, as you'll be out for a long time and the weather can cut up rough. We have a stock of spare jackets but these may be rather "outsize" as they are mainly for DofE.

MOUNTAIN BIKING

We head to the Pedalabikeaway centre in the heart of the Forest of Dean, where you'll split into groups based on your biking ability and appetite for challenge and spend a morning or afternoon biking with excellent instructors. Some of the trails are relatively straightforward, some are very technical. Whichever group you are in, you'll need to dig deep into your energy reserves to make the most of it. If you can't ride a bike, let us know in advance. Or better still, learn to ride a bike. For this activity, if you have cycling shorts with some padding your anatomy will thank you, but any sort of shorts that go to or just below the knee are fine. **Bring fingerless gloves if you have them.**

CAVING AND CLIMBING

You'll have the choice of EITHER caving OR climbing. If you have a really strong preference you should be able to go in one or the other, but if not please be flexible so we can make the groups work. This is as much a psychological as a physical challenge, and usually there are some boys who think they don't like heights or enclosed spaces, but the patient instruction of the expert cavers and climbers helps most people get over the fears they thought they had. We hope to restart the SGS caving programme which previously started with a trip to Pierre's Pot, Goatchurch Cavern and Swildon's Hole in the November of Year 9 and built from there.

MASTERCHEF COMPETITION

In your tent teams of five, you'll have a budget of £5 per person (handed out to you when we descend en masse on Tesco's) to create a three course culinary extravaganza to feed yourselves and provide a tasting plate for the judges.

The standard is very high – you get marks for each course for ambition, flavour and presentation for each course. So a pizza you heat up in the oven or a straightforward pasta with tomato sauce won't get you anywhere. Oven space is limited and a bit slow, and the grill isn't very fierce, so although we usually have a few cakes and the occasional pie, you're best to go for things that can be cooked on a hob or a camping stove. You can bring spices etc. from home if it would be a

waste of money to buy a whole jar just for a pinch of it, but the main ingredients have to come out of the £5 per person budget.

CAMP FIRE FEAST, WIDE GAMES, BUSHCRAFT, TEAMBUILDING

As well as the headline activities that involve going off site, there will be lots going on back in the campsite. We have a few campfires, including one where you'll build fires in tent groups and then cook fish, sweet potatoes, sweetcorn, bananas with chocolate and so on in the embers. We do make a lot of effort to cater to people with special diets and food is big element of the trip. If you're just a fussy eater, we encourage you to try things you haven't eaten: you'll need lots of energy for the activities so just get stuck in.

We'll also have some wide games, which involve creeping around in the woods as part of some scenario or other, and opportunities for you to do some bushcraft/survival skills such as constructing a tarp bivi. We'll also try to squeeze in some teambuilding and problem solving challenges.

There will also be some downtime in which you explore the site and create your own entertainment. It's about getting away from the computer/phone screen and enjoying being in the real, natural world.

SWIMMING

At some point we'll get you to a swimming pool, partly to ensure you don't start to stink too much. Usually we head to Bathurst Pool, an outdoor pool run very professionally by the local community, where you can splash about rather more than in an ordinary pool. So bring your swimming stuff.

COMMUNICATIONS

Hopefully this and the kit list below gives you all the information you need. Boys will be able to ask questions at the meeting where we form teams. If parents have any queries after that, or ones that can't wait, please email jason@outspark.co.uk or ring 01245 830300 which will also be the emergency contact number during the trip. Please do let us know if there are any changes in medical, dietary or contact information from when you filled in the form. Other than that, looking forward to a super trip!

Boys are asked **not to bring mobile phones or other electrical equipment**, as part of the experience is getting away from technology. It is not practical for us to send out updates during the week, as it's very hectic and internet connectivity is limited. **So please assume that no news is good news, and that the first you will hear from us is when we send an update on the way back to update you on our expected arrival time back at school on Friday.**

KIT

There is the risk that in some activities you may get wet, therefore it is wise to have at least 3 complete changes of clothes.

SUPER IMPORTANT – PERSONAL MEDICATION

If you are supposed to have an asthma pump, epipen or other safety-critical medication, you will need to show it to one of us before you get on the minibus, and can't leave without it, even if you have not needed it for ages. So please double and triple check before leaving home.

TWO REFILLABLE WATER BOTTLES at least 1.5 litres in total

FOR THE JOURNEY THERE

A small backpack or other bag which will travel with you on the minibus. This should contain:

- 1) Water bottle
- 2) Waterproof jacket and trousers
- 3) Any medication you have to have with you, such as asthma inhalers/epipens
- 4) Packed lunch
- 5) Anything non-electronic you need (apart from a busful of people) to keep you entertained on the journey – cards, travel chess, the complete works of Arvin Yuon etc.

FOR THE CANOE BIVI

If you put these in one bag, or inside a bin bag within your main bag, you'll save yourself time while we're getting ready for this activity.

A complete change of clothes from top to bottom.

Warm hat.

Warm Jumper / fleece

A headtorch plus spare batteries.

Sleeping bag.

Roll mat.

Water shoes or extra trainers (not flip flops or sliders)

Suntan lotion

OTHER STUFF

A large holdall or rucksack (suitcases are a bit of a nuisance as they take up space in your tent) containing:

Sunhat or baseball cap – IMPORTANT

Another warm Jumper / fleece

Trousers X 2 / **not jeans**

T shirts x 3

Shorts

Swimming trunks

Towel

Trainers

Walking boots (these need to be worn in and comfortable).

Fingerless gloves for mountain biking if you have them (or other gloves suitable for gripping)

3 pairs of thick socks

2 pairs of sports socks

Night wear

Spare plastic bags

Wash kit and small towel

Woollen hat, gloves

Insect repellent

Cutlery – knife, fork, spoon or spork

Any regularly taken medicines

Small amount of spending money – no more than

£20 max. You probably won't get the chance to

spend it other than at the services, unless the

weather is awful and we end up visiting civilisation in Cardiff.

Optional items

Plasters for cuts/blisters or a small First Aid kit

Pack of cards or portable chess set

Camera

String

Guitar, harmonica, zither, hurdy-gurdy or other musical instrument

Jokes that are not in any way –ist and which at least some people won't have heard before. Riddles too.

WHAT NOT TO BRING AT ALL

Don't bring mobiles phones, speakers,

Gameboys, iPod, mp3 player, radio or indeed

anything electronic, other than a cheap digital

camera if you would like to. Spend a week living in 3 dimensions and making your own entertainment!

Maths question.

If 42 boys each bring a penknife on a trip, and each has a 2% chance of injuring himself, what is the probability that a member of staff has to spend four hours in A&E getting one of them stitched up? The mathematical answer takes a bit of calculating, but the short answer is – **don't bring a knife.**

If you do bring valuables that get lost, soaked, broken or spoilt, hard cheese, tough luck and don't say I didn't warn you.