

Venture Out Holiday Clubs – Parents information

What it's all about?

Our holiday club is like sending your child to an Outdoor Activity Centre for a week but a lot cheaper because it isn't residential. Morning drop off and evening pick up are around work times (8:30am drop off – 4:30pm pick up with late pick up possible for extra charge). So, your kid can come, have an active day out then go home and eat a dinner they are used to and get a good night's sleep in their own bed without you worrying about them or them being 'home sick'.

- A packed lunch and snacks is included in the price.
- It's completely outdoors, regardless of the weather.
- A programme of activities that are a mixture of teambuilding, nature handicrafts, outdoor sports, bushcraft, forest school, nature games, canoe trips.
- They can come for a day, a week, multiple weeks or parts of different weeks.
- Our centre is in Heaton Mersey (Burnage Rugby Club) and uses the Mersey Vale Nature Park and the river Mersey.
- Smaller, friendlier club – limit of 30 kids per week.
- Staff hold multiple qualifications and experience of working with children.

There is method in our madness

The week's programme, and daily structure have sound educational and playwork principals imbedded that help make the club so popular and with the participants. The other key components are the quality of the staff and the great kids that come back every year.

On the first day of the club we split the 30 kids into 3 groups around their own age and do icebreakers. This starts the process of making new friends, which is easier in a smaller group. On Tuesday they are in these groups again and do Teambuilding activity in the morning. For the rest of the week we mix big and small group activities. So, by the end of Tue kids will have made new friends and feel more comfortable in the larger group of mixed ages.

On Monday and Tuesday we do activities at the centre and in the area nearby to allow us to 'get to know the kids' before we take them on longer canoeing journeys. The activities chosen for the first two days enable us to encourage socialisation and buddying up for activities. The activities also allow us to coach the children in a variety of sports to develop their confidence.

Throughout the week we intersperse, the high energy activities and sports with lower energy and more creative activities, like forest games and handicrafts. This is primarily to manage the children's energy levels throughout the week. It is our experience, that most kids are already tired by Thursday and so we do the lower energy bushcraft day then before the big canoe expedition on Friday. The mixture of activities appeals to the wider audience, and controlling the tempo and tiredness is key to managing the behaviour of the group. We still get tired and grumpy kids on a Thursday, so we ask that all parents encourage plenty of early nights during this week.

Gallery of other years

[Summer week 1 2017](#)

[Summer week 2 2017](#)

Testimonials

Our Holiday Club has been running for 7 years and is loved by kids and parents. Drawing kids from all over South Manchester, but mainly Didsbury, the Heaton, Stockport, Chorlton. Attracting comments from parents on our social media like:

“I love your holiday Club, my child comes home full of stories of new friends and great activities. They eat all their dinner and then fall asleep!”

“My daughters attended a few days of the summer camp last year and had an amazing time! They really enjoyed all the activities, especially the kayaking. The staff are very experienced and are really good with all the kids. My daughters will definitely be back this half-term and also in the summer.

Highly recommended for a fun and exciting alternative to the usual summers camps!!!”
([Trip advisor](#))

“This is the only holiday club my boys will go to, they hated all the ones with too many kids going crazy in a big hall all day, they just felt lost or bored”

“Ben did this last week! Every night he came home saying it was the best week ever! The best holiday club ever xx”

The activities

Bikes

We have our own fleet of children’s bikes that fit 8 year olds to adults. In our first session, we use coaching games and challenges to improve skills and risk assess the groups. This session takes place on a soft surface (astroturf pitch). Then, on the second day we take them out for a short ride on gravel trails along the side of the Mersey and in meadowland. On this we practice the skills from the day before. We do not have time to teach children to ride, and so, if your child cannot ride or is very wobbly, then, for their safety, we put them with another group, doing a different activity. If your child is small for a Year 3, then they sometimes struggle on our smallest bike. If this is the case, then you will need to bring their own bike on those days. Please ensure that the brakes work, and the tyres are not flat. We provide helmets and fingerless gloves which the young people must wear.

Bouldering

Short climbing wall with rubber flooring and so doesn’t require children to rope up. This allows more children to climb at the same time and so do games and challenges to improve their movement and coordination skills.

Canoeing, kayaking and river trips

Canoes are large boats with 3 seats and we connect 2, side-by-side, to make ‘rafted canoes’. These are impossible to capsize, and children never fall in from these. Our kayaks are double Sit-On-Top style kayaks – they are like large plastic surfboards with 2 moulded seats. These are very wide and stable – they are difficult to turn over, but kids sometimes fall in from these when playing games. During the Summer, if the weather is warm enough and the river slow enough, we might time-table Stand Up Paddleboarding. On first couple of days on the holiday club, we have short sessions where the children are shown how to paddle the craft and then play games. This develops their confidence. On Wednesdays and Fridays, we go as a larger group for longer trips on the local rivers. Children do not need to be able to swim but they must not be afraid of water. They must wear life jackets and if they fall in they will be floating next to their floating boat to hold on to until the leader helps them climb back on. Staff leading these activities are qualified Canoe coaches. For kayaking

and Stand Up Paddleboarding they wear helmets. We have kid size paddles for all craft. For these activities we make the children wear their waterproof trousers and coats to help them stay warmer. We are situated next to the River Mersey and use it for kayaking and canoeing. The river is normally slow enough for us to paddle up if for games sessions then come back to the centre. However, there can be to odd day or week when the river is too fast to make this fun so we either later the programme and do to session on another day, or if it is to rain all week we avoid the 'Fun and games sessions' but still do the river trips. Please bear this in mind if you are just booking one day for you child to go canoeing – we never guarantee paddling.

Archery

We have a purpose-built archery range and real bows. This is a really popular activity with children and although it sounds 'dangerous' the only accidents we have is when the string sometimes hits the inside of the arm.

Bushcraft / Forest School / Nature games and handicrafts

We spread these activities throughout the week and the dedicated day of Bushcraft is one of the most popular days. Children enjoy these more chilled out activities interspersed with the higher energy activities and sports. These can be activities like, dipping in our purpose-built pond, building toy rafts to race in the river, playing 'Hide-and-Seek' style games in the woods and meadow. Bushcraft day – has the children working in small groups to learn skills like: how to build a tarp shelter, gathering wood and starting a fire. Cooking on a fire. These activities are tailored to the age group to ensure they are not put at undue risk from tools or fire.

Who it's for?

Children that are sociable, like to run around in woods and don't mind getting wet, muddy or falling down.

Boys and girls – some weeks there are more girls than boys, sometimes it's the other way around. We work hard to make it inclusive and encouraging for both.

Age ranges

Year 3-8 for Summer Weeks (just finished those year groups and not about to go into them)

Year 4-8 for Easter and Whit week (May/June). Currently in those year groups.

If your child is older or younger that these please don't contact us to ask if they can come.

Why the age ranges? -

We don't accept younger children, even if they have an older sibling at the club. This is because weather at Easter and Whit can often be colder than Summer and so we do the higher activity sports to keep them warmer. Smaller children get colder more quickly and struggle to cycle on our bikes or to keep up with the older kids. Accepting them just wouldn't be fair or safe.

We don't accept older kids, even if they have been other years or have younger siblings at the club.

We have to have a cut off somewhere and from experience have learnt that we shouldn't have a club where a 13 to 14-year-old is playing around an 8 year old. I'm sure if you think about it you can work out reasons why not.

Not sure how long to book or if your child will like it

You can book your child for a day, a week, multiple weeks or parts of different weeks.

If only booking your child on for a day, then prioritise one of the first two days as these days are structured to help them make friends.

If you think your child may struggle with the pace of the club then consider booking them for the Monday, Tuesday and Thursday to allow them to re-energise and avoid the 'Big, tiring river trips'.

Sometimes parents are not sure whether their child will enjoy it and only book their child for a couple of days. Every time this happens, the child loves it and asks if they can do the rest of the week with the new friends they have made. Unfortunately, in the Summer the week is usually already full, and we do not squeeze more on. Easter and Whit week are less well-subscribed. If you are unsure if your child will go on their own, then we recommend that you tell the parents of their friends and see if they too would be interested in sending their child along.

Health, Safety, Child protection, behaviour, and managing your expectations

As parents, you will already know that small accidents and illness are common place for children when at school or out playing – it is not different when children come to do an activity week with us. Our job is to minimise these, but they cannot be completely eradicated. Common things we experience every year are: children getting tummy bugs, exhaustion from dehydration and sun, small cuts, stings and thorns. Bruises from falling over or banging into things. Some parents worry unduly about the canoeing and water, when it's one of the safest things they will do that day. The cycling however is more problematic, it is common for less able or experienced riders to 'lose control' and fall over. It's rarely at speed but can result in grazed hands and cut shins (pedal strikes). Therefore, we provide gloves and start all sessions with a few skills checks before committing the group to a longer ride. Thankfully never anything more major than that. All staff hold national qualifications to lead these sports and hold a first aid qualification and will have a first aid kit with them.

Bullying: Each morning is started with a quick chat about expectations and how to support each other. Meanness is discouraged, and bullying is not tolerated. In general, the kids who come are an absolute joy to be around, but it is not unheard of for a good kid to show off or experience another child who rubs them up the wrong way or get caught up with others that are being inconsiderate, especially as kids get more tired as the week goes on. In these instances, we talk to the children concerned and have them suggest improvements – and then we hold them to it. We will inform both sets of parents at the end of the day to ask for their support. If a child continues to struggle we can offer 'chances' and discuss 'day bans' with parents. It is rare for aggressive behaviour and in these instances, we would have the child collected by a parent. Our staff are experienced with managing behaviour and we do not look to be over-bearing, instead we encourage safe, enjoyable, experiences. Our primary concern will however always lie with the larger group, and the holiday club experience that their parents felt they were buying in to. Likewise, we need parental support, so if your child comes home unhappy about something then please feel free to drop Kevin an email or give him a ring to alert him to the problem.

In the event of a child needing to go home during the day, it is a similar procedure to school - we will ring the emergency contact number you give us on the booking form and have someone come and collect them.

[Our full range of policies, insurance, activities licence are available to view on our website](#)

Staffing

Unlike most other holiday clubs, we usually have a ratio of 1 leader to 10 children and an extra staff member as coordinator. And we keep the total number of children to 30 per day.

Kevin Beattie, the Venture Out Education and Technical manager, coordinates the scheme. He is a qualified Biology teacher and has worked safely with people of all ages in the outdoors for over 20 years, as a play worker, teacher, outdoor instructor and White-water coach. He holds a wide range of qualifications for outdoor sports, and certificates for First Aid at Work, Managing Safety, and Safe guarding children.

All our group leaders are very experienced in working with young people and are very good at what they do. They will hold the qualifications required for them to lead the sports we provide, and they will have worked extensively with this age group before.

Our Adventurous Activities licence is awarded by the Health & Safety Executive and it requires that we only use staff who hold First Aid and Criminal Records check (CRB/DBS).

What to wear and bring

It is a completely outdoor holiday club. We do not use any indoor space, other than the toilets and a canopy where we start and finish the day and have lunch. This means that your child will be outside from 8:30am-4:30pm (8 hours). Children cool down a lot faster than adults. We find it is common even for adults to under-estimate the effect of a slightly cold/wet/hot day on their own health and comfort. It is also common for them to over-estimate their own ability to cope with those conditions over a few hours if they are not properly dressed. For this reason, we ask that you help your child choose appropriate clothing, help them pack a change of clothing and check they have packed full waterproofs (coat and rain over-trousers). **SOME CHILDREN ARRIVE WITHOUT THE KIT WE HAVE REQUESTED AND AS WE DO A KIT CHECK WE THEN HAVE TO REQUEST PARENTS GO HOME A BRING MISSING ITEMS.** This may seem 'excessive' but the correct clothing is essential to their comfort and ultimately to their safety and welfare. We take that seriously.

- Children need to come in sport clothes that they are happy to get wet and muddy each day in. This can be any type of sports / outdoor sports clothing.
- Clothes made from cotton soak up water, are slow to dry and feel cold so please try to cloth them in polyester (tops and bottoms).
- They must bring a **fleece, waterproof trousers and coat** – even on warm days! They will need these for canoeing. **(TROUSERS CAN BE BOUGHT FROM BETWEEN £6-£10 FROM DECATHLON)**
- Long sleeve tops and trousers / leggings are preferred as they provide protection from the Sun and from nettles.
- We do not use wetsuits as they necessary for sitting in a canoe however, if your child wants to bring their own they are welcome to.
- **DO NOT SEND CHILDREN IN CROCS or SANDALS - THEY NEED TO HAVE SOME OLD TRAINERS.** Crocs and sandals are not secure for running around in the woods and they float off in the river. Wellies are good for the days where we go on canoeing trips or on the bushcraft day.
- On cold or wet weeks send them with gloves and a beanie hat
- Bringing phones, ipods, electronics isn't advised as we do not have secure storage.

Medication and sun cream:

You must send your child with sun block (spf 30-50) and already creamed. Even on cloudy days because they are outside for 8 hours. Send them with a small bottle of their own cream.

If your child suffers from hay fever, please ensure they take an antihistamine every morning.

We will look after medication, but your child must be able to self-medicate. In the case of EpiPen's, our leaders hold first aid certificate and will know how to use them. Your child will have it in pack and give it to the leader they are with for each activity.

Lunches

- Included in the price is lunch and snacks.
- Lunch consists of: sausage roll / cheese & onion roll, sandwiches, crisps and a piece of fruit. The sandwiches are ham, chicken, cheese or a mixture. The children make them themselves, we don't use spreads, but they can add ketchup. Break times we put out biscuits and juice.
- Feel free to pack extra snacks - it might be that children want their favourite snacks and drinks with them as this is a very active club.
- We provide beakers to drink from, but drinks bottles are popular and can be refilled with our juice.
- We can provide gluten free bread if notified on the booking form however we don't have snacks and biscuits so please pack extra.

How to book & pay

On our website we have a 'Holiday Club' page. Here you will find this leaflet to download, dates of the clubs, and link to a separate online booking process. This will ask you to fill in forms and pay online. We do not accept payment on the day or cash.

Please note that on some days we have a different pick up destination so before booking please check the activities and pick up for that day.

Cost

£30/day/child (no discounts for siblings or multiple weeks)

This includes lunch and snacks. (see 'Lunches' for details)

When compared to other providers of holiday clubs we feel this is still great value for money with all the activities that the children do throughout the week. These activities require expensive equipment and the staff with qualifications and expertise. We only accept 30 kids total and keep staff to child ratio of 1:10. This is not a cheap holiday club for us to run.

Child care vouchers? – No sorry, we cannot register with Ofsted because we use a building that is accessible to the public and spend most of our time outside in public areas.

Cancellation by you: This is non-refundable within last 2 weeks. We are usually over-subscribed for the Summer weeks, this means that if you cancel at short notice, other parents who were interested

in that week or day, will already have found alternatives. And so, we are not guaranteed to recoup any cost of re-reimbursing you. We don't absorb the cost as it is no fault of ours.

Cancellation by us: You get full refund. This has never happened for a Summer week and it is rare for the Easter and Whit weeks. If it were to be a possibility, it would be because of very low numbers booked on a day – we have found that if there are only 5 kids booked then those 5 kids just don't enjoy it. We would give you 14 days' notice to allow you to make other arrangements

Communicating with us

We receive huge numbers of emails and phone calls about activities, and sometimes people are unrealistic about the time of the day, they contact us or our response time. Often the information they want is on our website and in documents already provided. We don't have someone answering emails all day everyday – during the Summer especially we are outdoors working most of the time. Therefore, we tend to do email in batches and you don't get an instantaneous response. We are always looking for ways to reduce the impact of this on our work and home lives. And so, we ask that you help us with this.

Before you email or ring us:

Check for your answer on our website and make sure you have read through this document. When you email us please provide as much detail as possible about who you are and what you want. Please respect our home-life we ask that you not ring us before 8am or after 8pm in the evenings and at weekends not after 6pm.

If you need to contact us during a day, then ring Kevin 07980 306869.

Follow the fun on Facebook

We aim to upload photos of the activities each evening, so you can see what your kids are talking about.

<https://www.facebook.com/Venture.Out.co.uk>

Dropping off and picking up

Our centre is on the grounds at Burnage Rugby Club SK4 3EA.

We start each morning with a register on the veranda beside the Club's front door.

Pick up destinations can be different on some of the days we do river trips.

Drop off

We accept drop-offs at our centre from 8:30am and activities start at 9am. Our staff are there earlier but will not register kids as they are busy setting up activities. You are welcome to come earlier but must sit with your child until registration starts.

Activities start at 9am and children must be there by 9am as we often go off-site and may not be there if you are late.

Arriving late or sick child? – please ring or text Kevin (07980 306869) before 9am if you are not coming or are going to be late. We need to know that we can start without your child. And if you need to arrive late or have a medical appointment, we can arrange to be at the centre when you arrive.

Pick up

We finish all activities by 4:30pm so please pick up children between 4:30 and 5pm (at the latest) from the veranda.

If you need a later pick up this is available up to 6pm for a charge of £10/child/day but this is only by prior arrangement

Pick up (Wednesday)

On Wednesday, we paddle down to Northenden so pick up for all must be 4:30pm prompt. Find us in the playground in the Riverside Park, Northenden.

Address: Mill Lane, Northenden, M22 4HJ

Google map: [click here](#)

Pick up on Fridays (Easter and Whit Weeks)

On Fridays during Easter and Whit we paddle down to Jackson Boat pub near Sale Waterpark. Pick up is at 4:30pm prompt

Address: Rifle Rd, Sale M33 2LX

Google map: [click here](#)

2018 dates

Easter Weeks: (Years 4 to 8 only)

Week 1: Tuesday 3rd April – Friday 6th April (4-day week)

Week 2: Monday 9th – Friday 13th April

Whit Week Half Term (May-June): (Years 4 to 8)

Week 1: Tuesday 29th May – Friday 1st June (4-day week)

Week 2: Monday 4th June – Friday 8th June

Summer Weeks: (Years 3 to 8)

Week 1: Monday 23rd July – Friday 27th July

Week 2: Monday 30th July – Friday 3rd August

Week 3: Monday 6th August – Friday 10th August

Week 4: Monday 13th August – Friday 17th August

Week 5: Monday 20th August – Friday 24th August

Week 6: Tue 28th August – Friday 31st August



Venture Out Holiday Club programme (Summer Club)

This is an outline of the week's activities,
 This timetable can change due to numbers booked on and the weather. So, no guarantee!
 On a 4-day week we miss out the Friday.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Small group Activities day	Small group Activities day	Woodland games & canoe trip	Bushcraft day	River Tame canoe expedition
08:30 Drop off & register	08:30 Drop off & register	08:30 Drop off & register	08:30 Drop off & register	08:30 Drop off & register
09:00 Intro to club and week	09:00 Teamwork challenges	09:00 Woodland games	09:00 Session 1	09:00 waterproofs/lunch stuff
09:30 Name games & ice breakers	11:00 break	11:00 break	11:00 break	09:45 catch bus
10:30 break	11:15 Session 1	11:15 woodland games continue	11:15 Session 2	10:15 Break at Reddish Vale & gear up
10:30 name badges - group names	12:30 Lunch	13:00 Lunch	12:30 Lunch	11:00 Launch
11:00 Session 1	13:00 Session 2	13:30 canoe and kayak to Northenden	13:00 Session 3	12:15 Lunch at weir
12:30 Lunch	14:30 Break	14:00 launch	14:30 Break	15:15 Arrive at Centre
13:00 Session 2	14:45 Session 3	15:30 Arrive Northenden weir	14:45 Session 4	15:30 Changing rooms
14:30 Break	16:15 pack up	16:00 get off/pack up/play in park	16:15 pack up	16:00 Break and chill out
14:45 Session 3	16:30 pick up.	16:30 pick up.	16:30 pick up.	16:30 pick up.
16:30 pick up.				
<u>Activities</u>	<u>Activities</u>	<u>Activities</u>	<u>Activities</u>	<u>Activities</u>
model raft race or pond dip	bouldering	scavenger hunt	fire lighting	
bike skills	bike ride	camouflage competition	cordage	
SOT kayaking or canoeing	archery	man hunt	cooking on a fire	
		sardines	Den building	
			Tarp shelters	



Venture Out Holiday Club programme (Easter & Whit Clubs)

This is an outline of the week's activities,
 This timetable can change due to numbers booked on and the weather. So, no guarantee!
 On a 4-day week we miss out the Monday or Friday

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Small group Activities day	Small group Activities day	Woodland games & canoe trip	Bushcraft day	River Mersey canoe expedition
08:30 Drop off & register	08:30 Drop off & register	08:30 Drop off & register	08:30 Drop off & register	08:30 Drop off & register
09:00 Intro to club and week	09:00 Teamwork challenges	09:00 Woodland games	09:00 Session 1	09:00 waterproofs/lunch stuff
09:30 Name games & ice breakers	11:00 break	11:00 break	11:00 break	09:45 catch bus
10:30 break	11:15 Session 1	11:15 woodland games continue	11:15 Session 2	10:15 Break at Reddish Vale & gear up
10:30 name badges - group names	12:30 Lunch	13:00 Lunch	12:30 Lunch	11:00 Launch
11:00 Session 1	13:00 Session 2	13:30 canoe and kayak to Northenden	13:00 Session 3	12:15 Lunch at weir
12:30 Lunch	14:30 Break	14:00 launch	14:30 Break	15:15 Arrive at Centre
13:00 Session 2	14:45 Session 3	15:30 Arrive Northenden weir	14:45 Session 4	15:30 Changing rooms
14:30 Break	16:15 pack up	16:00 get off/pack up/play in park	16:15 pack up	16:00 Break and chill out
14:45 Session 3	16:30 pick up.	16:30 pick up.	16:30 pick up.	16:30 pick up.
16:30 pick up.				
<u>Activities</u>	<u>Activities</u>	<u>Activities</u>	<u>Activities</u>	<u>Activities</u>
model raft race or pond dip	bouldering	scavenger hunt	fire lighting	
bike skills	bike ride	camouflage competition	cordage	
SOT kayaking or canoeing	archery	man hunt	cooking on a fire	
		sardines	Den building	
			Tarp shelters	