

Adventurer's MK HAND BOOK



Fostering Fun, Friendship and Adventure for
Young People and Their Families

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO:

Welcome!

We are pleased to welcome you to Adventurer's MK.

Our organisation proudly serves young people and family members committed to our vision of making this world a better place to think and grow, play and create, observe and wonder, explore and experiment, appreciate and share. Adventurer's MK offers positive fun, friendship and adventure!

Introduction

This is a guidebook for Adventurer's MK members, their families, and leaders. As you read along, you will notice some of the information is written to help adults and other sections are written with the young people in mind. It is all intended to be shared together.

The training is based on using the natural desires of young people as a guide to the activities that will attract and hold them. The appeal of true adventure has always been to that element of the outdoorsman, pioneer, and explorer, which is part of our nature, and is at its most evident in young people.

Adventurer's MK offers a choice for those with curiosity, energy and independence of spirit. We are committed to providing an appropriate alternative and community-oriented nature based experience. Adventurer's MK welcomes everyone. Our mission is to provide a positive learning environment within the natural world around us. We foster the development of our Troop in an environment of mutual respect and cooperation.

What does it mean to be an Adventurer?

Being an Adventurer means you are going to go out and start to explore and discover the world for yourself. You may not discover new lands, but there's a big world out there filled with things for you to see, learn about and try for yourself. You won't be doing things alone, but with other kids near your own age, boys and girls together.

There are different levels in Adventurer's according to how old you are, the names of these levels are Mini Adventurer's, Adventurer's and Pioneers. Whatever your age, you can expect to make new friends. You'll have fun playing different games, in some games you'll compete to win and in others you'll have to work together as a team to complete a goal.

You can also expect to learn different skills, work on DIY projects, and find out how things work through experimental and practical programs. You will learn more, do more, and try new things. Always remember that in the end, every day can be an adventure.

As an independent group, free from any religious or political association, we are non-regimental and run purely with the support and generosity of our adult volunteers and helpers, we offer our young people the freedom to explore and develop at a pace that suits them. Although we strongly encourage participation we do not enforce it.

Uniforms

Our officially branded polo shirts and hoodies are available at reasonable prices should your young person choose to wear them. Again this is encouraged but not enforced. They can be purchased direct from the suppliers online at www.kedaphschoolwear.co.uk (look under the search tab for Adventurers).



Our Adventurer's Hoodies are priced at £17.99 and range from sizes 26/28 to adult sizes 42/44 for £19.99 and the Polo shirts are priced at £13.99 and range from sizes 26/28 to adult sizes 38/40 for £15.99. Both have Adventurer's written on the back

The Adventurer's MK Moral Compass

**As an Adventurer, I promise to always do my best,
To treat others with dignity and respect.
To protect our planet
And preserve our freedom.**

The Adventurer's Moral Compass, is good to know and practice. Even more important is that in your everyday life we try to live by those words. So the first step in living by them is to understand what they mean.

Always doing your best is being focused, following the safety rules and being the best you can possibly be. - What does treating people with dignity and respect mean? That's simple, treat people just the same way as you would want to be treated. Some people call that the Golden Rule. - Protect our planet is all about taking care of our environment, and how we treat nature as a whole. - Preserving our freedom is all about empowering each other as individuals to learn and develop at our own pace and in our own time. This builds character and confidence.

An Adventurer is Truthful, Respectful, Responsible, Fair, Dependable, and Caring

Truthful

Be honest • don't deceive, cheat or steal • be reliable — do what you say you'll do • Have the courage to do the right thing • build a good reputation • be loyal — stand by your family, friends and country

Respectful

Treat others with respect; follow the Golden Rule • be tolerant of differences • Use good manners, not bad language • be considerate of the feelings of others • don't threaten, hit or hurt anyone • Deal peacefully with anger, insults and disagreements

Responsibility

Do what you are supposed to do • persevere: keep on trying! • Always do your best • Use self-control • be self-disciplined • Think before you act — consider the consequences • be accountable for your choices

Fairness

Play by the rules • Take turns and share • be open-minded; listen to others • don't take advantage of others • don't blame others carelessly

Caring

Be kind • be compassionate and show you care • Express gratitude • Forgive others • Help people in need.

It Takes a Community to Raise an Adventurer

In much the same way that Adventurer's MK values the importance of nature in helping young people develop in positive ways, we also believe a strong community experience helps nurture, guide and support our young people.

We believe that when adventurer's see themselves as belonging to a larger social structure, for example when they take part in a shared social cause, they feel good about themselves and others.

In every meeting, outing and activity, Adventurer's MK leaders endeavor to model and foster a spirit of "one for all and all for one." This approach, coupled with the notion that we each have something to teach and plenty to learn, allows each young person to feel valued, validated, cared for and in turn, caring.

Adventurer's MK Mission

Our Mission can be summed up in five easy points:

1. To introduce boys and girls ages 6 - 18 to the great outdoors through camping, hiking and other adventure activities.
2. To meet weekly to learn and practice wilderness skills and safety procedures.
3. To help members participate in group games, sports and community engagement projects.
4. To develop social and group-building skills in natural settings throughout the year.
5. To encourage growth in all areas of personal development: social, physical, intellectual, creative and emotional. We aim to spark intellectual curiosity in all areas, especially in areas related to the natural sciences and nature.

The Meeting Places

Adventurer's MK meets up every Tuesday evening for an after school session at 5pm until 7pm at the Fishermead Trinity Centre. Fishermead Boulevard. Fishermead. MK6 2LA.

Every Wednesday and Sunday we meet at the Elfield Nature Park, which is within the National Bowl (Watling Street side, and opposite the car auction) from 10am until 4pm. This is also where we hold the majority of our events and camping sessions. This is a secure site, and the gates are kept locked at all times, giving our Troop the freedom to explore in a safe environment. Visitors coming to the site would need to phone through to gain access – The telephone number to call is 07747716453.

Elfield Park is unlike anything else we have in Milton Keynes, boasting a wonderful mix of woodland, short turf, wildflowers and flowering shrubs that hum with butterfly and insect life, which in turn attract bats and birds to the park. An existing pond encouraging amphibian life in which rare species such as the great crested newt can breed.

When outside please dress according to weather conditions.

As a member in Adventurer's MK, you will be on a path to learning and growing. As you move along, you'll want to challenge yourself to be the best you can be for yourself, your friends and your family. That's where Adventurer's advancements come in - As you go from one level to the next, there are things you can do that will earn you an award. In Adventurer's, we call these things milestones. These are ways you can measure your progress.

This booklet is filled with information and ideas for how to organise and have fun in Adventurer's MK. But one of the most important messages we want to deliver to young people and leaders alike is the importance of paying honour and respect to our "sponsor," namely Nature.

What do we mean by that?

True Adventurer's always engage in what's called "minimum impact camping." Adventurer's understand that we are all part of nature, and as such, must have respect for nature and each other while out in nature.

- Adventurer's never disrupt or destroy the natural environment. For example, Adventurer's would never mindlessly chop at or into living trees or capture and kill wild animals in the name of sport.
- We do not carelessly drop litter or endanger wildlife by our actions or presence.
- Adventurers obey signs set out to ensure safety and explain rules.
- Adventurers always remain calm and quiet in areas where noise would disturb wildlife or others out exploring. In this way, everyone can enjoy and help protect their natural surroundings!

Personal Hygiene

Keeping yourself clean while camping is just as important as it is at home especially when preparing or eating food and of course going to the toilet. When you are out in the elements it is very easy to get dirty and expose the skin to microorganisms and germs that live in the dirt.

Adventurer's prepare for this by putting together a small kit that can easily be placed in the backpack. The kit will contain, among other things, a toothbrush, toothpaste, wash rag(s), towel, soap, comb/brush, and toilet paper. In addition, you may need to include any special creams or medications you use at home.

Plan to bring only as much as you will need for your camping trip in order to economize on the limited space in your pack. Anticipate how much you will need based on how many nights you'll be away from home. You can find small travel-sized containers for your toiletries and other items at local pound shops. (Make sure they are waterproof and air tight).

The great outdoors is no place for heavy use of cosmetics, hair sprays, deodorants, or any such products with a strong fragrance, as the scent of these items will attract bugs and the attention of unwanted wild animals. Look for unscented products wherever possible.

Building, Lighting and Extinguishing a Fire

Campfires are one of the best parts of outdoor camping, but they can pose danger if anyone in the group does not behave in a responsible manner and practice common sense.

Never build a fire without the knowledge and permission of an adult leader. NO EXCEPTIONS.

Once the fire is going, be sure to maintain a safe distance and never engage in behavior that might put you or one of your fellow members in danger of getting burned.

Your outdoor Fireplace

The first step in building a fire is to decide on the best location. Many parks and campgrounds set aside special areas for fire building. They may even have grills or fireplaces available in which to build fires. If your campgrounds provide such accommodations, always use those rather than clearing your own spot.

If there are no pits or grills provided, select a good spot on which to build your fire. Look for a spot on gravel, sand, or bare earth, away from trees or brush that could accidentally catch on fire. Under NO CIRCUMSTANCES should you build a fire bigger than your immediate need.

Then, follow these safety steps:

1. Clear the spot of any ground cover that might burn.
2. Lay a mound of mineral soil in your spot. The mound should be about 2 ft. square and 3 inches thick. You'll build your fire on top of this mound.
3. Collect the three types of materials you'll be burning for your fire: tinder, kindling, and fuel.

Tinder is small, easily ignited, fast burning material used to heat the kindling to burning. Look for dry pine needles, tiny twigs, dry grass, small pinecones, moss, birch bark, and even crumpled bits of paper. All of these make good tinder.

Kindling is used to ignite the fuel wood. Dead, dry twigs no larger than a pencil make for good kindling.

Fuel is the wood that will burn as your campfire. Fuel wood should be larger than kindling, but no larger in diameter than your arm.

Arranging and Lighting the Fire

Now that you've collected your wood, you're ready to arrange the fire:

1. Form a base by placing a few fuel-sized sticks in a platform pattern on your fire spot.
2. Put a loose handful of tinder in the center of the platform.
3. Place a mound of kindling on top of the tinder.
4. Finally, arrange the fuel wood around the kindling in the form of a small teepee, leaving openings to allow air into the center.
5. Using a flint and steel to light the tinder. The tinder will light the kindling, which will ignite the fuel wood. When the fire is burning, you can add more fuel wood – Be careful not to suffocate the flames, without oxygen your fire will go out.

Putting out the Fire

Adventurer's who build and make use of an outdoor fire are responsible for seeing that the fire is properly extinguished and all evidence of having a fire removed. Remember; Leave No Trace. Never leave a burning or smoldering fire unattended.

Once the fire has burnt out, sprinkle water on it until you're sure the site is cool. Stir the ashes with a stick to ensure there are no remaining embers. Practice minimum impact camping by removing all evidence of your presence. Remember that the area is home to the plants and animals that live there. Just as you would not visit someone's home, make a mess, and leave it behind, don't leave a mess in nature's home

Using and Caring for a Pocketknife

Adventurer's MK recommends that no member be allowed to carry a knife without completing their Knife Skills program. Once you have demonstrated your understanding of proper knife handling skills to an adult leader, you may be allowed to carry a pocketknife with you as an adventurer.

Any adventurer found to be using a pocketknife in a careless or negligent way WILL lose their knife and privileges and would need to complete their Knife skills program again.

A pocketknife is the one tool that every adventurer should learn to use and care for wisely. From preparing meals to cutting twine to whittling marshmallow sticks, the versatile pocket knife is probably the tool most commonly used by outdoors people. That said, misuse can damage the tool,

or worse, cause serious injury. A good pocketknife should be sturdy, but compact and easy to use. It must be maintained properly for it to work effectively.

Pocketknife rules

Here are some other safe pocketknife rules to keep in mind:

1. Never under any circumstances carry a knife out in public.
2. Always keep the blade closed when the knife is not in use.
3. Never carry or pass a knife to another person with the blade open. Someone may grab the blade end of the knife.
4. Never throw a knife, even just to fool around. A thrown knife can cause serious injury.
5. Don't misuse a knife. Using the knife for any purpose other than cutting – i.e. hammering or prying, could damage the handle or snap the blade.
6. Keep your knife dry and clean. Don't close a knife when it is wet or dirty. This will dull the knife and shorten the life of its blade.
7. Wipe your knife dry and clean before closing it; oil it every so often with vegetable oil.
8. Keep your knife sharp. A dull knife can be hard to work with, and will be more likely to cause accidents.

Water

While out in the natural environment, it's essential to have an ample supply of fresh and clean water for drinking, cooking and washing things at all times.

Never rely on streams, lakes and ponds to be drinkable even if they do look crystal clear. A concern with natural sources of water is that sometimes you can't be sure of their purity. In these instances you will need to purify the water before using it. There are several methods of purifying the water. The most common way to purify the water is to boil it for 10 minutes, which will kill anything harmful in the water and make it safe to drink and use. Before you purify the water you will need to clean and strain the water of debris.

First Aid

First Aid is only an emergency action. It is not intended to cure, except in the case of very simple scratches, and so on. It is to prevent the damage from becoming worse until it can be treated by the skilled professional who is a doctor, nurse or other qualified healthcare provider.

There may come a time when you or another Adventurer will encounter a situation requiring first aid. First aid should be one of the first badge requirements to work towards. Of course, the best way to deal with emergencies is to prevent them from ever happening in the first place.

After prevention, the next best way to handle emergencies is to prepare ahead of time by learning correct information and by practicing current, sound procedures. When an Adventurer is prepared with knowledge and practice, he or she is more likely to stay calm and react reasonably and intelligently in the face of even the most extreme emergencies.

As with any medical emergency, always use the "DR ABC" approach.

Danger – Always check for danger and make sure it is safe for you to proceed.

Response – Check to see if the casualty is okay – Talking to them and getting a response will be invaluable.

Airways – Check that the casualty is breathing properly with no obstructions to the airways.

Bleeding – Check for and treat severe bleeding by using pressurised elevation methods

Circulation – Checking that the casualty has the correct skin tone could save a person from going into shock and can identify several other medical factors.

Training Programs

There are several training programs that an Adventurer can learn, and more are being added on a regular basis. (Can't find what you like – let us know and we will do our best to include it). There are also different levels to those programs – from knowing the basics through to becoming a master. Each one earns the participant a patch of recognition to be worn with pride and a certificate to display.

Along with bushcraft and survival training, we also train on various life skills – Cooking, Home Repair and Financial Management to name but a few.

Survival

Knowing what to do in a survival situation is not just about being out in the woods – an emergency plan is also required in your own home too. Flooding, fire and electrical power cuts could happen to individual houses or whole communities, knowing what to do in order to keep you, your family and neighbours safe is all part of the Duke of Cornwall's Community Safety Awards.

Having an emergency bag packed and ready to go should a situation ever arise is always a good thing to have, with things like torches, spare batteries, sleeping bag, fire starting kit, pocket knife, cooking utensils, clothing, toiletries and a first aid kit. This may all appear to be an expensive protocol for a "What If" scenario, but bear in mind – would these not be the normal things required for a one day camping expedition?

Emotional Fear

How people react to fear depends more on themselves than on the situation. Some fears can lead directly to a sense of helplessness and hopelessness. Fear must be recognised, lived with, and if possible, used to your advantage by channeling your excess energy created by adrenaline towards the tasks at hand. Understanding fear, and coping with it, is part of the Adventurer's training.

Fear of the unknown – "What is out there? What's going to happen to me? Where is it safe?" By accepting this fear as normal you can remain calm and begin to answer each question individually. Do not criticize yourself for having critical or negative thoughts, just concentrate on, and resolve each new question or problem calmly and confidently.

Regardless of the survival situation or location – The main point to remember is to stay calm and S.T.O.P. the actions you take should be based upon your immediate needs.

- **Stop** and stay calm.
 - Establish a base and a warming fire (which can have a calming effect)
- **Think**, and take actions to reduce your immediate risks
 - If it's getting dark, prepare to spend the night, If you are wet, get dry and warm as soon as possible.
- **Observe** your situation and evaluate your options
 - Look at the risks you face and think about how you got where you are and what the best solution might be.
- **Plan** and act to ensure your survival.

Edibility of Plants

Plants are a valuable sources of food because they are widely available, easily procured, and, in the proper combinations, can meet all your nutritional needs. The critical factor in using plants for food is to avoid accidental poisoning. Eat only those plants you can positively identify and you know are safe to eat. As the old saying goes "**If in doubt, Leave it out**"

Mushroom identification is very difficult and must be precise; even more so than with any other plant. Some mushrooms cause death very quickly. Some mushrooms have no known antidote. Two general types of mushroom poisoning are gastrointestinal and central nervous system.

Leadership skills

Along with Teamwork we also train in the art of Leadership skills. Young person can earn their Team Leader badge by showing commitment, dedication and respect to their fellow Troop members, then progressing to a Patrol Leader, each role displaying a variety of responsibilities. As with all leaders – It is how you respond towards others and how you react in the different situations that will be observed and earn you your leadership stripes. Being a leader has nothing to do with issuing orders – It is all to do with earning the respect of your Troop – Remember - Don't expect anyone to do something that you would not be prepared to do yourself!.

To be a Good Leader

You should confidently be able to say that YOU:

- Are RESPONSIBLE
- Have COMMON SENSE
- Show INITIATIVE
- Are AWARE
- Are ETHUSIASTIC and KEEN
- Are PREPARED
- Show LEADERSHIP
- Are MATURE
- Show COMPASSION
- Have SELF CONFIDENCE

BUT MOST OF ALL...

- Are FLEXIBLE enough to ADAPT to situations, even when things don't quite go according to plan.

Always try your very best to make your Troop the greatest it can possibly be - I'll tell you right now it won't be easy; there will be a lot of difficulties and disappointments. But if you give it your all, you will get so much more in return, and you will impact the members of your Troop in ways that can last a lifetime.

Costs

As an independent group, we need to finance ourselves. We do this by charging weekly subs of £2.00 per session. Camping and special events may be charged slightly higher depending on the location and activities available.

All subs can be paid weekly, monthly or quarterly dependent on your own personal preference and can be paid in cash, bank transfer or via PayPal. All subs help to pay for insurance, land fees, annual licenses, materials, tools and equipment and of course the badges that each individual Troop member has the potential of earning. All our leaders are volunteers and there is no hierarchy to employ. This means that any surplus funds goes straight back into the group.

We also run fundraising activities and events which help support us and keep costs down to a minimum for you the parents of our members. We have a fundraising platform with <https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/adventurersmk/> Here you can do your normal online shopping and a percentage of commission comes straight to us at no extra cost to you. Please help by registering your support and encourage other family members and friends to do the same.

Licenses, Insurance and National Bodies

We are registered with the Milton Keynes Council to hold youth based activities. We hold valid insurance and are registered with various National Award Schemes such as the John Muir Awards and the Duke of Cornwall Community Safety Awards,

Volunteers

All our volunteers hold enhanced DBS certificates, first aid trained and possess a variety of different skills all of which enhance to enjoyability of our Troop.

More Information

For up to the minute news, please join our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/YouthTroop> or visit our website at: <https://www.adventurersmk.com>. We are also on Twitter at: https://twitter.com/Adventurers_MK

You can also call or text me on 07747716453