Section 1

Project or location | *Great Leaps Adventure - The River Medway – Maidstone Canoe Club*

Details of work & area (specify people, equipment, materials, substances, frequency & conditions)

The activities included within this risk assessment are:

Kayaking
Canoeing
Raft Building

Participants partake in a variety of paddlesport activities as part of their enrichment, education provision or therapeutic engagement. These activities will take place at appropriate times which link to the participants' main experience aim.

All Participants are supervised throughout by qualified British Canoeing/Canoe England Coaches.

Department (or business) supervising the work

Instructor Team

Now complete Section 2 (next page) – Use the tables below to assess the risks

Likelihood of Harm	*L*	*Probable Severity*	*S*	*Risk Rating R (LxS)*	
Very unlikely	*1*	*Trivial Injury*	*1*	*1 to 6*	*LOW*
Unlikely	*2*	*Minor Injury*	*2*		
50/50 Likelihood	*3*	*Moderate Injury*	*3*	*7 to 14*	*MEDIUM*
Likely	*4*	*Major Injury*	*4*		
Very Likely	*5*	*Fatality*	*5*	*15 to 25*	*HIGH*

Likelihood of Harm (L) \ Probable Severity (S)	1	2	3	4	5
2		4	6	8	10
3		6	9	12	15
4		8	12	16	20
5		10	15	20	25

People at risk

Participants/staff/members of the public. All have completed a medical/physical activity readiness questionnaire prior to commencement of their activity.

Comments

These activities are part of an identified activity/experience requested by an external party and provided by Great Leaps Adventure.

The activity content and all the various physical abilities for the group have been considered and it is deemed a low to medium risk activity.

Date for re-assessment or review (default to 12 months from date below): 30th March 2026

Risk Assessor: Jamie McConville Reviewed by: Graeme Pryke Date: 30th March 2026

Section 2

Hazards & Dangers	Possible Harm	Control Measures in Place	LH	PS	RR	Further Action
Paddles	Arms, Face, Hands - Various	Clear briefings and supervision throughout the activity.	1	2	2	
Lifting & Carrying	Back, Shoulder - Various	Briefing on correct manual handling technique (min 2 persons per boat)	1	3	6	
Kayak/Canoe Entrapment	Drowning, Panic attack - Various	Qualified Coach and staff team assisting pre trained on the dangers. Brief on getting in and out of kayak/canoe, to include releasing the spray deck, if being used. Boats fitted correctly and securely. Suitable footwear worn – not to big.	2	5	10	
Canoe – improvised raft & sailing	Trapped fingers Swamped boats Raft falling apart Entanglement	Qualified/Experienced Coach. Collapsible sail. Clear briefings & supervision. Coach to carry a knife.	2	3	6	
Raft Building	Entanglement, Dislocations - Various	Qualified/Experienced Coach. Clear briefings & supervision. Knife carried. Helmets worn during construction & on water. Pre launch safety inspection by tutor.	5	2	10	
Passing under bridges/objects	Canoe getting stuck sideways. People launching/throwing from bridge.	Stop up river and brief group. Ensure that they are lined up well before obstacle to pass safely. Avoid or wait dependent on the situation (Dynamic)	2	3	6	

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Section 2

Hazards & Dangers	Possible Harm	Control Measures in Place	LH	PS	RR	Further Action
Equipment Failure	Cuts, bruises, entanglement, wet - Various	All equipment checked prior to use. Regular checks, maintenance & renewal schedule. All equipment to correspond to required standards. Personal protective equipment checked for correct fitting & monitored throughout activity by lead coach.	2	3	6	
Deep Water Cold water shock Clients not being able to swim. Becoming knocked unconscious. Becoming entangled in a tree.	Drowning, wet - Various	Buoyancy aids to be worn correctly & lead coach to monitor throughout activity. Informed about cold water. Throw ropes and towline with coaching boats. Instruct capsize and rescue procedure before heading into deep water/difficult exit situations. Swim Test (with buoyancy aid) before/start of activity.	1	5	5	
Changing Weather Conditions	Sunburn Hypothermia Hyperthermia	Kit list provided before activity session. Lead coach to check weather forecast prior to session & observe conditions throughout. If necessary, stop activity and move to safety (often minibus or accommodation). Change plans as necessary. Ensure participants have suitable & adequate clothing plus access to warm (or cold) drinks. Remind visiting staff & young people about sun protection. Group shelter & throw line available with lead coach.	2	3	6	
Blue-green algae	Illness	Monitor sites/areas after long periods of hot, still weather. Avoid and limit use of contaminated sites/areas.	2	3	6	
Giant Hogweed	Skin irritation and blistering. Future sunlight irritation.	Lead coach to brief participants and point out the weed at the earliest opportunity to avoid contact or exit from the water at the weeds location. Provide advice to treat in safety brief.	2	3	6	

Section 2

Hazards & Dangers	Possible Harm	Control Measures in Place	LH	PS	RR	Further Action
Inappropriate behaviour from other paddlers within the group	Various	Lead coach to brief the group on safety and advise of roles when situations require. Remove paddler or whole group from the situation or the water and end the activity for a short or whole period of time.	2	3	6	
Other traffic on the water causing sinking or crashing	Drowning, breaking, cuts, bruises - various	Lead coach to brief the group at the start about staying to the right hand side of the river during travel for both directions. Move to the side of the river (Safe point) when larger craft look to pass.	2	5	10	
Wildlife – Birds/Swans	Cuts, bruises, Breaks, capsize - Various	Lead coach to brief the group at the start about potential wildlife encounters and what to do to avoid/limit contact.	2	3	6	
Medical emergency caused by pre-existing medical condition	Instructors, group and other visitors - Various	Participants complete a medical declaration prior to session Coach to check all medicals prior to session Coaches are qualified first aiders. Participants are requested to make themselves known to their supervising coach if they have any pre-existing conditions. In the very unlikely event that a participant should suffer from a medical emergency (i.e. heart attack, stroke, epileptic fit, diabetic emergency) the emergency services will be contacted. Appropriate First aid treatment will be administered.	2	5	10	

Section 2

Hazards & Dangers	Possible Harm	Control Measures in Place	LH	PS	RR	Further Action
Injury caused by: Jewellery/clothing becoming caught - Slipping on jetty Jumping / falling in shallow water	Various	Long hair or dangling straps are tucked away. Remove or tape over any jewellery. Prior safety briefing about the hazards of the launch area and lifting techniques, once told about techniques clients can assist the coaches with loading and unloading boats. Immediate access to a first aid kit by an lead coach at all times. Mobile phone is required to be taken to the site of activity by the lead coach. Coach to ensure depth of water is deep enough for the activity. Water levels and river section to be considered in relation to ability of group.	2	3	6	
Substances in the water when practising capsize and rescue drills	Stomach and mouth infections, illness or skin irritation	Disperse the substance or move to a cleaner/clearer area on the water.	1	3	3	
Banging head/limb during a capsize drill from capsize or resurface	Bumps, Bruises, facial and Concussion	Ask if the group wish to participate in the drill. Explain the safety aspects and the risks. Advise about helmet use. Work with participants to wear a helmet during the Canoe capsize drills.	1	3	3	

CHILD PROTECTION
Our policy is consistent with current good practice in this area and meets current statutory requirements. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks are carried out on all staff.

SUPERVISION WHEN NOT ON ACTIVITIES
This is the responsibility of the group leader.

EQUIPMENT
All Specialist equipment is provided.
All equipment provided will be fit for purpose and is inspected. Records of equipment checks are available for inspection on site.

FIRE SAFETY
The centre is covered by a modern detection system which is regularly maintained and tested. Our building conforms completely with the latest fire regulations. A fire risk assessment is carried out annually.