Dear Parent / Carer

Please find below information about what personal equipment your son / daughter should and shouldn’t bring to Plas Dol-y-Moch. Additional pages have information about the nature of activities and safety at Plas Dol-y-Moch. Please don’t hesitate to call the Centre if you have any further questions or concern.

Yours Sincerely

Alistair Cook
Head of Service

PLAS DOL-Y-MOCH PERSONAL EQUIPMENT, CLOTHING AND INFORMATION

A. THESE ITEMS WILL BE PROVIDED BY THE CENTRE

Boots  Rucksacks
Waterproofs  Specialist Equipment (for climbing, canoeing, etc.)

B. ESSENTIAL ITEMS FOR TRAVELLING, EVENING AND GENERAL USE

Coat  Socks - bring plenty
1 set casual clothes  Underclothes (bring plenty!)
Shoes / Trainers  Nightwear
2 Towels (1 large)  Plastic carrier bag for dirty washing.
Personal Washing Gear (including soap, toothpaste, shampoo)

Field Studies – Pens, pencils, notepaper

Please bring a soft holdall or a small suitcase, as we do not have room for large suitcases, especially rigid or “hard cases”.

C. **ESSENTIAL ITEMS FOR ALL COURSES**
The nature of the activities may be hard wearing on students’ clothes so they are advised to bring old items from the following list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
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<tr>
<td>2 pairs of Trainers (including 1 old pair)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimum - 3 pairs trousers/track suit bottoms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimum - 3 long sleeved fleeces</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minimum - 3 pairs of thick socks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Warm Hat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gloves</td>
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<tr>
<td>T Shirts (plenty)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Torch and Battery</td>
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No jeans on activities.

D. **OPTIONAL ITEMS**
Books
Water Bottle
Calculator (for Field Studies)
Wellingtons
Camera
Swimming Costumes
Notebook
Pens / Pencils
Travel and Board Games

E. **ITEMS TO BE LEFT AT HOME**
For health and safety reasons you must NOT bring –

- Any mains electrical equipment including hairdryers, CD players, kettles, plug in razors, irons, heaters, mobile phone chargers etc. The Centre can provide hairdryers.

- Chewing gum / Food supplies - The Centre provides all food and there is a tuck shop.

- Any medicine (including painkillers like paracetamol). Inform your teacher if you need to bring medicines and they will make arrangements.

- Mobile phones should not be brought, they are unnecessary, disruptive, unsafe and could hinder an emergency (Dol-y-Moch staff carry mobile phones). The Centre has a strict code of use for mobile phones and reserves the right to confiscate phones and return them to parents.

F. **SPENDING MONEY**

Please ensure all purses / wallets have a contact name inside.

Souvenirs -

A new system has been set up at the Centre. Pupils will need to choose what they want and record it on the attached Tuck Shop Order Form, place the correct amount of money in an envelope and attach to the order form. Hand your completed form to your school staff. On arrival at Dol-y-Moch your school staff will pass on your order form to the centre staff. Gifts will be sorted and ready for the children to pick up on the last night of their visit.

Children will need to bring a separate amount of money if they wish to purchase sweets from the evening tuck shop.

G. **TELEPHONE**

There is one public telephone at the Centre for pupils’ use but it can be difficult for them to get time or a turn to use it. Please don’t worry if you don’t hear from them - no news is good news. We also advise you against phoning them as it can be difficult to get hold of them as they are kept busy. In emergency parents should telephone the Office number. Assume that no news is good news if you do not hear from your child - we will contact you if anything is wrong.
ACTIVITIES AND SAFETY AT PLAS DOL-Y-MOCH
INFORMATION FOR PARENTS
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What are the activities my child will be taking part in?

Plas Dol-y-Moch is an Outdoor Education Centre and all its courses are linked to the school curriculum i.e we use adventure activities and field studies experiences to enhance the learning that goes on in school.

Every course is different, and nobody does all the activities we offer at Dol-y-Moch. Some courses are field study orientated, others are adventure based. Your child's teacher will be able to tell you the planned programme near to the date of the visit.

The most popular adventure activities are as follows:

- **Kayaking / Canoeing**: The Centre has 4 fleets of boats. Some are single seat kayaks and some are open boats that can carry more than one person. We mostly use these on the small centre lake or on a slow flowing river. Sometimes the kayaks are used on the sea. Children always wear buoyancy aids, and if appropriate helmets.

- **Climbing / Abseiling**: the centre has a small climbing wall and uses nearby rock slabs with a range of routes. Children are safeguarded by ropes, harnesses and helmets.

- **Gorge Activity**: this involves group challenges in a steep sided river valley. This involves scrambling over rocks, along ledges and crossing the river. The water is generally shallow and children are issued with helmets, boots and if appropriate, harnesses.

- **Mountain Journey**: a journey on foot through one of the mountain ranges in Snowdonia National Park. Usually involves reaching a summit and scrambling over rocky terrain.

- **Mine Adventure**: involves going underground into a disused mine, that has been inspected under a scheme approved by the Health and Safety Executive. Inside, mines are often spacious caverns which can be reached by straightforward walking, sometimes scrambling over rocks or wading through water. Children are issued with helmets, lamp and protected by rope and harness if appropriate.

- **Orienteering / Wayfinding**: Children find their way, in small groups, using maps, through local woodlands with adult supervision.

2. What are the staffs' qualifications?

All permanent Dol-y-Moch staff are qualified teachers and are highly experienced in adventurous activities. All have extensive local knowledge of the areas around Dol-y-Moch used for activities. All staff are qualified first aiders.
3. **Who checks the staff and activities?**
   Plas Dol-y-Moch is registered with the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) as licensed to provide activities under the headings of caving, climbing, trekking and watersports. Details can be confirmed by calling The Licensing Authority, telephone 02920 755 715.

   AALA check qualifications, management, safety policies, risk assessments of the Centre's activities.

   Plas Dol-y-Moch is owned by Coventry City Council and run by the Children, Learning and Young People’s Directorate (CLYPD). CLYPD has an Outdoor Education Steering Group with elected members, Headteachers, school governors and others, who act as a Governing Body and watchdog to the Centre. The Centre is non profit making and is actually subsidised by the LA and schools.

4. **Does this mean my child is safe on activities?**
   Safety is first and foremost in everything we do at Plas Dol-y-Moch. We give children adventurous experiences in a real environment and we reduce the likelihood of accidents, by carrying out and reviewing risk assessments for each activity. No one can guarantee accidents won’t happen, but we do follow best practice in providing the activities.

5. **What makes up best practice in adventurous activities?**
   - **Quality of staff** - see question 2
     a. **Monitoring** – staff, incidents, accidents, near misses and sharing this information.
     b. **Training** – regular training to ensure staff are up to date with good practice
     c. **Management** – provide a policy for safe working and practice it
     d. **Decision making** – the ability to change venues / activities depending on environmental hazards (weather, water levels etc) and the nature and ability of the group.

6. **What if my child is scared or doesn’t want to do an activity?**
   We do not force pupils to do things they don’t want to. However, we only do activities that all children in the group are capable of doing. We encourage everyone to have a go as we know they feel so proud when they do, especially if they have overcome a fear.

7. **Do you cancel activities if the weather is bad?**
   We give all children appropriate protective clothing for each activity and every child is given quality waterproofs and boots so if it rains we still go out.

   However, the qualifications and experience of our teaching staff do mean that they have the ability to assess if it is too windy, too cold, too wet or the rivers are too high for an activity. We then change location or the activity for safety reasons.

8. **What if my child is ill or just unhappy at Dol-y-Moch?**
   Don't phone us – we’ll phone you if there is a cause for concern. We contact parents if children are ill, but not necessarily if they are homesick, they usually get over that in a couple of hours. No news is good news.

9. **My child is not a confident swimmer, will he/she be safe?**
   Children don't need to be able to swim to take a full part in all the activities. For canoeing and kayaking, children wear buoyancy aids and the beginners kayaks have a large cockpit for ease of entry and exit.

   There are strict codes of practice for other situations which involve water so that children are safeguarded from getting into difficulties.