

## **HopScotch Respite Breaks**

Welcome to HopScotch, we hope that you and the children have a fantastic time at Ardvullin.

The enclosed guide gives you all of the information you need to maximise the experience and have a great holiday. We ask you to read all of the information in the guide carefully, it's important you are aware of all of your responsibilities over the week.

It is quite simply **3 P's**

### **1. Prepare**

Select the children carefully and prepare them for the break beforehand so that they know what to expect. Please complete the required paperwork and return it to us at least 4 weeks before your holiday.

### **2. Plan**

We want you to get the best from your holiday so select daily activities in advance (it's in the paperwork) that way we can more easily co-ordinate daily activities.

While we hope it all goes to plan, you need to prepare for the unexpected so have a contingency plan in place just in case a child needs to return home for whatever reason.

### **3. Play**

At least 3 members of your staff must accompany the children on all day trips - the evenings are your responsibility so be prepared for a busy week!

Bedtimes, catering and discipline are all within your control, so agree your preferred rules and stick to them!!

Lastly, enjoy your holiday, we know that it will be hugely rewarding for everyone.

## **THE CHARITY**

### **About HopScotch**

HopScotch Children's Charity was set-up in 1998 to provide free breaks for vulnerable children living in Scotland.

## **PREPARATION**

### **Selecting the Children**

HopScotch holidays are for groups of up to 12 children. Sleeping arrangements dictate that the group should consist of 6 boys and 6 girls, or 12 children of the same sex. All children should be between 7-11 years at the time of the holiday, be able to cope with a week away from their normal environment, and have no other chance of a holiday this year. The children should not have been on a HopScotch break before and children or close relations of user organisation staff may not take up place on the holiday.

Children are not eligible for a holiday if they have a recent record of violence or other problems, which could place other children and members of staff at risk.

### **Work with the children before the holiday**

We recommend user organisations arrange at least one meeting with the children prior to the holiday so that they know what to expect.

It is important that you are aware of the following:

- HopScotch provides simple breaks. Although we have increased our range of activities this year you will spend some time visiting beaches and going for walks.
- HopScotch's Project Worker, Anna Marshall is based at our respite centre, Ardvullin. She will be with you every day and will co-ordinate daily activities.
- There are no TVs/videos/DVD players or electronic games at Ardvullin. The children should not bring any computer games or electronic games with them. Mobile phones can be brought but must be stored in a safe place at Ardvullin during the day and should only be used for essential calls or texts.

## Paperwork

With this pack there are three sets of forms we need for insurance and health and safety purposes. All these forms must be returned to HopScotch Children's Charity at least **4 WEEKS** before the holiday. **NB** If you don't have all the forms completed within the 4 week timescale please just send in what you have and the remainder can be forwarded at a later date.

No child will be allowed on holiday unless the user organisation has obtained parental consent.

HopScotch Children's Charity holds information about children, staff and volunteers at their office, and will at all times maintain confidentiality with regard to this information. However if a child is at risk there is a clear duty to disclose information to the relevant authority, in line with our child protection procedures.

## **Insurance**

HopScotch has public liability insurance in relation to the Respite Centre with Aviva Insurance UK Ltd. Our Mini Bus Insurance is provided by QBE. User Organisations must ensure they carry adequate insurance for the children whilst in their care.

Copies of both insurance documents are available on request.

## **Back-Up Plan**

We recommend you have a back-up plan in case a child or children have to be returned home due to family situations/behavioural issues/homesickness. This could either be a member of staff on standby at home who could collect someone if need be, or an accompanying staff member from your organisation could take a vehicle to Ardvullin for the duration of the break, and a child/children could be brought home immediately if necessary. Whilst HopScotch staff will try and support groups as much as possible we are a very small staff team and we are not always available to transport children/members of staff home early.

## **Severe Weather**

In the event of severe weather e.g. high winds or snow, we may have to delay the start of your break or return you home early. We have battery operated lights, alternative heating and cooking facilities in the event of a power cut during your stay.

## **Pre Visits**

We recommend that if you haven't been on a HopScotch break before that you visit Ardvullin prior to the holiday. This can be arranged by phoning us on 0131 336 5554/07771762071 to arrange a suitable time.

## **The Visiting Carer's role**

You are directly responsible for the well-being and enjoyment of the children at all times and your average day at HopScotch will include activity sessions as well as continuous care of the children. Anna, HopScotch's Project Worker, will liaise with you to plan each day's activities.

During your chosen HopScotch activities you may be required to participate and assist in the various parts of the programme that require your help. You will spend the majority of your time during the day assisting in one (or more) particular activity ensuring the children are happily enjoying what they're doing. It's likely that you'll end up taking part in many of the activities, so while you don't need to be an expert, a have-a-go attitude is essential.

In addition you will have to fill the gaps between activity sessions and meals, with fun games and activities as well as ensuring the welfare of the kids. This includes;-

- supervising and entertaining children when travelling in the minibus by for example, playing games such as 'I Spy' or singing group songs.

- supervising children at all times when in the house, play area and grounds.
- ensuring children are appropriately dressed for the weather and on daily activities.
- organising a programme of evening activities. We can provide you with prepared Scavenger Hunts, Treasure Trails and arts and craft materials.
- ensuring quiet and calm once children are in bed.

As well as the supervision of children, other daily responsibilities include preparing all meals and keeping the house clean and tidy. The house is clean and ready for you on arrival and we would ask that you leave it in a similar condition when you leave.

For health and safety reasons we would also like you to keep the house clean and tidy on a day to day basis, paying particular attention to:-

- hanging waterproofs up to dry / drying wellies
- bringing play equipment/ toys into the house at night
- mopping up after showers
- encouraging respect for property, equipment, and facilities and reporting breakages and any damage to property to the Project Worker as soon as possible.

## THE CENTRE

### **Ardvullin, HopScotch's Holiday Centre**

Ardvullin is situated in Ardgour on the Ardnamurchan Peninsula. It is reached by crossing the Corran ferry just north of Ballachulish, 8 miles south of Fort William. Ardvullin stands in 5 acres of private grounds overlooking Loch Linnhe.

We have an adventure playground, which includes a 30 metre aerial runway (flying fox), a clatter bridge, tyre traverse ladder and a scramble net. Children should always be supervised whilst in the playground. For safety reasons only one child should use the flying fox at a time and helmets must be worn. Only one person is allowed on the trampoline at a time, there must be no flips, and the net must be closed whilst in use.

We have tried to make Ardvullin as welcoming as possible; the rooms are big and bright. Sleeping accommodation at Ardvullin comprises girls and boys bunk rooms and male and female staff bedrooms. All beds have a duvet, pillow, sheet, mattress protector and bed linen. There are male and female shower rooms and one of the staff bedrooms has en-suite facilities. Laundry facilities are located in the utility room. We have a large kitchen with everything required for self-catering - electric cooker, AGA cooker, microwave, fridge, fridge/freezer, dishwasher, pots, pans, crockery, cutlery, utensils and baking equipment.

Ardvullin is clean when you arrive and we ask that you leave it that way at the end of the week otherwise money may be deducted from your security deposit. HopScotch's housekeeper comes in once a week before groups arrive to wash and change bedding. Cleaning equipment and materials are provided for use.

Please sort out your recycling waste and ensure that all the bottles/cartons/cans are washed and put in the correct bins to the left-side of the house.

Please don't flush wipes, sanitary wear and cotton wool pads down the toilet. We have a septic tank at Ardvullin and it can be easily become blocked by these items resulting in unpleasantness and inconvenience for subsequent groups.

## THE HOLIDAY

### Luggage

Luggage space is limited on the bus so it's very important that everyone has one average sized sports bag. Food should be packed in cardboard boxes or carriers bags. We have provided useful checklists for you and for the children. Also, please let us know in advance if you would like cool boxes provided for storing the food on the journey.

### The Journey

Jackie, our minibus driver will pick you up from the specified location and drive you to Ardvullin. Normal pick-up time is 11am on Monday. Please ensure all luggage and food is ready for loading and the children have all been to the toilet.

There are some rules we need to tell you about for travelling in the minibus. Please make sure everyone is aware of them:

- Everyone (including adults) must wear seatbelts at all times whilst the engine is running. In the event of an emergency or travel sickness during the journey, please notify the driver and they will stop at the next safe point.
- Heads, arms etc. must be kept away from the windows
- The driver must not be distracted during the journey.
- Rubbish must not be thrown out of the window.
- The driver must not be left in charge of the children during stops.

Food, apart from boiled sweets, should not be eaten during transit. There will be at least two stops on the journey - one for lunch and, depending on the distance you have to travel, one other break. Everyone should take a packed lunch and drink. The journey time will depend on the distance to Ardvullin and the weather and traffic conditions. There is a ferry crossing towards the end of the journey, at Corran, 8 miles south of Fort William. The crossing takes 5 minutes and the ferry runs every half an hour.

## **Arrival**

On arrival at Ardvullin, Anna will show you around the house and grounds, go through the house rules, unload the minibus and try to answer any queries you may have. Anna will discuss your activities for the week and it is an opportunity for you to discuss any relevant issues regarding the children. As you normally arrive late on Monday afternoon you won't go out in the minibus again until Tuesday morning. We normally go for a walk after dinner on Monday. This is a good chance for everyone to stretch their legs after the journey and to get acquainted with the local area.

Each child is provided with a pair of wellies, waterproof jacket and trousers, and a backpack for use during the holiday, and also a scrapbook and hat to keep.

## Daily Activities

We would like to know in advance what daily activities you would like to do during the holiday. Please complete the Holiday Activities Form and return it to us at least **4 weeks** before the holiday. HopScotch will cover the cost of one activity from Category 1 and one activity from Category 2, alternatively you can choose 3 activities from Category 2. If you would like an additional activity from either Category 1 or 2 please complete the holiday upgrade form, and there will be a charge. You should also expect to do at least 2 activities from Category 3.

### Category 1

- Canoeing - qualified instructors from Abernethy Trust or Highland Activities will take groups canoeing in a nearby loch. (journey time to activity - 5 mins for Abernethy or 75 mins for Highland Activities)
- Horseriding - Children can enjoy being escorted on lead rein pony rides at Achnalarig Farm in Oban. (journey time - one hour)
- SeaXplorer. The thrill of a fast boat trip is the perfect way to experience the wealth of Lochaber's history, wildlife and natural beauty - along the way you will see seals, porpoise, otters, eagles, deer, wild goats and a variety of sea birds. Their fully qualified (and very often amusing) skippers will offer a full interactive tour with information on history, folklore and wildlife (journey time - 20 mins).

- High Wire Adventure - high ropes course on the edge of the forest based at Nevis Range in Fort William (journey time - 40 minutes).

### Category 2

- Gondola (cable car) to the top of Aonach Mor, next to Ben Nevis and a walk to the viewpoint (journey time - 40 mins).
- Visit to the Sea Life Centre in Oban to see seals and otters being fed (journey time - 40 mins).
- Ice Factor - Indoor climbing arena in Kinlochleven (journey time - 30 mins).
- The Chocolate Factory Cafe in Oban a chocolate making workshop where groups get the chance to make their own delicious Belgian chocolate truffles (journey time - 1 hour).

### Category 3

- Camusdarach beach. Camusdarach is breathtaking. With plenty of opportunities for swimming, rock pooling and walking, the beach is a great place to spend a day. Camusdarach is the beach featured in the film Local Hero and is a popular place for film locations. The trip to Camusdarach is normally accompanied by a stop at the Harry Potter Steam Train enroute. (journey time - 80 minutes).
- Cycling around the grounds of Ardvullin and the surrounding area.
- Human Inflatable Table Football. This is a fantastic team activity which works on the same basis as a traditional table football but the children are the players.

- Visit Ardtoe beach, a beautiful sheltered bay about an hours drive from Ardvullin. With its beautiful sand and abundance of rock pools it is definitely worth the drive. Spot the seals on route bathing on the rocks.
- A team building activity in the grounds of Ardvullin.
- Ariundle Forest Walk - down by the river and through the woods this is a great walk for spotting frogs and plants.
- Inchree. A short walk to view spectacular waterfalls.
- Castle Toiram. Lovely sandy beach beneath a Castle - it's a great place to play rounders or fly a kite.

You usually leave Ardvullin at 9.45am each morning. Wellies, waterproofs and backpacks should be taken every day. The sun can be very powerful during the summer, especially at the beach so we have supplies of sunscreen and we ask that user organisation staff ensure children use the cream. Bouyancy aids are provided and must be used during fishing trips and visits to the beach.

A minimum of 3 user organisation staff (to 12 children) must accompany the children on day trips and the lead member of staff (carer) must participate in all the activities. Anna is responsible for co-ordinating and guiding you on daily activities. She is not responsible for looking after the children and should not be left in sole charge of them at any time.

HopScotch supplies midge nets, wristbands and repellent and we have a MidgeEater machine in the grounds of Ardvullin.

## **Evenings**

Organising the evening activities is your responsibility. The children are normally happy to play on the adventure playground or have a game of football, however they must be supervised at all times. Some groups of children will require a more structured programme and Anna can supply you with scavenger hunts, treasures trails or arts and craft material and indoor games.

## **Bed Time**

When the children go to bed is up to you and will depend on the age of the children. We recommend that staff set a fixed bedtime of around 9.30pm with lights out at 10pm to avoid overtiredness and distress for everyone the next day. It's a good idea to set this before the holiday, so the children know what to expect.

## **Catering**

HopScotch breaks are self-catering. We leave the cooking arrangements to you but this is what usually works best:

- Breakfast at around 8.30am - cereal, toast
- Packed lunch (you won't normally come back to Ardvullin for lunch) - sandwiches, fruit and something to drink. Cool bag/rucksacks are provided for each member of your group. Cool boxes and flasks are also available.
- Evening meal at around 6.30pm. Our advice is to keep it simple - pasta, pizza, curry.
- Supper before bed - hot chocolate and toast.
- Please ensure you take enough drinks for the journeys and on day trips to ensure the children stay hydrated.

We recommend that enough food is brought for the entire week and any essentials can be purchased from the local shop in Clovullin (half a mile from the house) or from a supermarket during one of your day trips. If you are shopping at least one member of your staff must be left with the children and please avoid long shopping trips.

Some groups encourage the children to help prepare packed lunches and evening meals. We have a BBQ and we will be happy to help set it up for you, but as part of HopScotch's Health and Safety regulations HopScotch staff cannot help to cook the food.

### **Phoning Home**

There is a pay phone at Ardvullin and the number (01855 841 377) should be given to parents/guardians. We suggest you organise a time to phone every day, if necessary.

### **Pocket Money**

The children normally take £5 pocket money each. In order to avoid upset we strongly suggest that all children have the same amount of money. We recommend staff organise a system so that money lasts and isn't all spent on the first day. Staff should keep the money and hand it out when required.

## **Behaviour**

We hope that for the children this break will be a great adventure. For many it will be their first holiday away from home and naturally they will be very excited. Discipline is your responsibility and we suggest that you set ground rules before the holiday, discuss them with the children and stick to them. HopScotch enjoys a good reputation both locally and throughout Scotland. Please ensure that the children maintain the highest standards of behaviour during the holiday, both at Ardvullin and on day trips.

## **Going Home**

You will normally be leaving for home at about 9.30am on Friday morning. We ask that the beds are stripped (except for the mattress protectors unless they are spoiled) and that all the rooms are left clean and tidy, ready for the next group of children. Everyone should check they have ALL their belongings with them. For health and safety purposes we ask that the fridge is emptied and any other opened food is thrown away. Jackie will return you to the collection point and there will be at least 2 stops on the way home, including a break for lunch if required.

We normally try and get you home between 1-2pm on Fridays but please check with Anna/Jackie before confirming a time with parents.

## **HEALTH & SAFETY**

### **HopScotch's Policy**

Promoting and maintaining the Health and Safety of children, staff and volunteers remains a primary consideration for HopScotch Children's Charity. However we recognise that as the user organisation you hold the primary care and responsibility for children and we would hope that their own health and safety regulations would compliment ours. HopScotch's has a Health & Safety policy that includes Risk Assessments for the house, grounds, minibus and all activities. Copies of all the Risk Assessments are on the Health Safety Policy CD enclosed with this pack along with a copy of HopScotch Children's Charity Child Protection document.

### **Safety and Fire Precautions**

HopScotch Children's Charity is fully responsible to ensure that appropriate health and safety fire regulations are in operation at Ardvullin. We will ensure at the beginning of the holiday that the fire and other safety rules are explained to all user organisations. All adults will need to be fully familiar with fire exits and appliances, evacuation drill and all other emergency procedures. We will organise a Fire Practice for all adults and children on the first day that you arrive and record that it took place, any problems and action taken to alleviate the problems. To comply with fire regulations the house must be kept tidy. The entrance to Ardvullin and all corridors and access areas must be kept clear of obstructions at all times.

## **Medical services**

HopScotch has established contact with a local GP willing to provide a GP service to the residents of Ardvullin, phone numbers, directions to the GP and to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department will be on display in the Reception Hall at Ardvullin. Any child who asks to see a doctor must be allowed to do so.

## **Storage and Administration of Medicines**

All drugs including medicines brought with the children and 'over the counter' drugs, but excluding inhalers, will be stored in the locked laundry room at Ardvullin that is inaccessible to children.

HopScotch staff will hold a key to this cupboard and one named person from the user organisation will be responsible for the storage and administration of drugs and will hold a duplicate key.

## **First Aid**

Anna is a fully qualified first aider. One member of your staff will also need to have a first aid qualification. HopScotch's minibus has a first aid kit and it is the responsibility of the Project Worker and user organisation staff to ensure that these are kept fully stocked and taken with the group at all times. Any expenditure on restocking the minibus first aid kits will be reimbursed by HopScotch Children's Charity. Details of any accident, injury or illness must be recorded on an accident form, however minor. Details of time, date, location, witnesses, action taken and by whom and nature of incident should be recorded. This should then be kept in the Accident/Incident book and a copy sent to HopScotch's office

either during, or immediately after the holiday. Accident/injury and incident forms should be kept with each first aid kit. A complete copy of HopScotch's Health & Safety policy is located at Ardvullin.

## **Swimming**

The Parental Consent Form should be checked to ensure that the parent or guardian has given consent.

It is the User Organisation's responsibility to ensure a sensible deployment of staff before the activity commences - there must be adults present in the water and on pool side and these should be sufficient to ensure an adequate level of supervision for all children in all areas of the pool. One adult must be in the water with Anna.

Public safety signs and danger warnings must be obeyed.

## **Smoking**

It is the policy of HopScotch Children's Charity that the workplace is smoke-free and that all employees have a right to work in a smoke-free environment. Smoking is prohibited throughout the entire workplace with no exceptions. This includes the minibus. This policy applies to all employees, user organisations, consultants, contractors and visitors. If you are a smoker Anna will show you an area where you can smoke out of the sight of the children.

## **Alcohol**

There must be no alcohol present at any time at Ardvullin. HopScotch and user organisation staff must not consume alcohol whilst on duty.

## **Drugs**

All non-prescribed, controlled drugs are banned from Ardvullin at all times. Any child found in possession of/and or abusing such substances will be removed from Ardvullin immediately appropriate arrangements can be made. Any adult found in possession of/and or abusing such substances will be removed from Ardvullin immediately.

## **Weapons**

Any child or adult found to be in possession of an offensive weapon must be removed from Ardvullin immediately. This includes firearms (including air pistols), swords, knives, catapults, crossbows, etc.

## **Children Absent from the Centre without Permission**

Children may not leave the Centre without permission. This can pose considerable risks for the child. It is crucial to act speedily to help protect the child from harm. If this situation does occur, HopScotch staff should be immediately informed and the correct procedures followed.

## **Child Protection**

We recognise our responsibilities as a children's charity for the prevention, identification and support of children who have been abused. We will co-operate fully with statutory or external agencies to assist with their investigations of disclosures or concerns of abuse. All HopScotch staff and volunteers are Disclosure Scotland checked. A copy of HopScotch's Child Protection Procedures is on the Health & Safety Policy CD.

## **Representation**

HopScotch Children's Charity encourages comments on how it could improve its service from users of its services, members of the community, and representatives of other organisations. All such comments will be given serious consideration as to their relevance and viability to HopScotch Children's Charity overall policies. HopScotch Children's Charity encourages direct contact by telephone to discuss views and ideas. However, specific comments should be submitted in writing to enable full consideration by management.

## **Finally**

HopScotch's aim is to provide the best possible break for the children, in the safest possible environment. For you as user organisation staff it is hard work and very tiring, but we hope that it will also be great fun and very rewarding, and a chance for you to develop positive relationships with the children.