



HopScotch Holiday Guide 2026

Information for partner and referral organisations



We're delighted to welcome your group of children and young people (children and young people) to a HopScotch break in 2025!

This guide contains essential information to ensure you have a wonderful experience with us. We strongly encourage you to read it, even if you have attended a HopScotch break before, as we regularly update the content. It's important to understand your responsibilities while you are here. We look forward to sharing this amazing experience with you!

We summarize these responsibilities with three simple principles: the 3 Ps.

1. Prepare

Carefully select the children and young people who will be joining the break and prepare them in advance, so they know what to expect. Please ensure that all required paperwork is completed and returned to us at least **four weeks before your holiday**.

2. Plan

To help you get the most from your break, we ask that you choose **two activities in advance**. While we hope everything runs smoothly, it's important to be prepared for the unexpected, so please have a contingency plan in place in case a child needs to return home for any reason.

3. Play

At least **three staff members aged 18 and over** must accompany the young people on all full-day trips. Evenings will be your responsibility, so be ready for a busy and rewarding week!

You will be responsible for bedtimes, catering, and discipline, so agree your preferred rules as a team and apply them consistently.

Finally, enjoy your holiday – we are confident it will be a positive and rewarding experience for everyone involved.

THE CHARITY

About HopScotch

HopScotch Children's Charity was set up in 1998 for children and young people who need a break.

Preparation

Choosing the Children and Young People

HopScotch breaks are for groups of up to 12 children.

Because of sleeping arrangements, groups must be either:

- 6 boys and 6 girls, or
- 12 children of the same gender.

All children must:

- Be aged 7–12 years
- Be able to manage a week away from home
- Not have another holiday that year
- Not have been on a HopScotch break before
- Not be a child or close relative of staff from the partner organisation

Children cannot attend if they have recent behaviour or other issues that could put other children or staff at risk.

Technology

Ardvullin is a technology-free environment. There are no TVs, DVD players, or electronic games available.

We understand that mobile phones and devices are a big part of children's everyday lives, and it can feel reassuring for parents when their child has a phone with them. However, one of the most important parts of a HopScotch break is giving children the chance to enjoy a week away from screens and focus on having fun, making friends, and taking part in activities.

For this reason, children and young people should not bring tablets, handheld games, smart watches with messaging functions, or similar devices.

If a child does bring a mobile phone, it will be handed in on arrival to staff from the partner organisation and stored safely for the duration of the stay. Phones will only be used for essential calls or messages, agreed in advance with staff.

We really appreciate parents' support with this. A technology-free week helps children relax, build confidence, and get the most from their HopScotch experience.

Paperwork

To make sure every child has a safe and well-organised holiday, we ask parents and carers to complete a small number of online forms for health, safety, and insurance purposes.

Please try to complete these at least four weeks before the holiday.

We understand that forms can take time. If you are unable to send everything by the deadline, please send what you can and forward the remaining forms as soon as possible. However, for your child's safety, no child can go on the holiday without parental consent.

HopScotch Children's Charity keeps all personal information about children, parents, staff, and volunteers secure and confidential.

We only share information if we are concerned about a child's safety and are required to do so under child protection procedures.

Insurance

HopScotch has full public liability insurance in place for the Respite Centre through Tower Gate Insurance UK Ltd. Our minibus is insured with QBE.

Partner organisations are also responsible for making sure they have suitable insurance to cover children and young people while they are in their care.

Copies of all insurance documents are available on request, and we are always happy to answer any questions you may have.

Backup Plan

We understand that being away from home can sometimes be challenging for children and young people. For this reason, we ask partner organisations to have a backup plan in place in case a child needs to return home early due to homesickness, family circumstances, or behaviour concerns.

A backup plan might include:

- Having a member of staff available at home who could collect a child if needed, or
- Bringing a staff vehicle to Ardvullin so a child can be taken home safely if required.

Having this plan in place helps ensure that any situation can be managed quickly, calmly, and in the best interests of the child, while allowing the rest of the group to continue enjoying their break.

Severe Weather

Your child's safety is always our top priority. If there is severe weather, such as strong winds or heavy snow, we may need to delay the start of the break or, in rare cases, end the break early. We will always make these decisions carefully and in the best interests of the children and staff.

Ardvullin is well prepared for power cuts. We have:

- Battery-operated lighting
- Alternative heating
- Facilities for cooking without electricity

This means we can continue to care for the children safely and comfortably if there is a temporary loss of power.

Pre-Visits

If your organisation has not stayed at Ardvullin before, we strongly recommend arranging a pre-visit before the holiday. This gives staff a chance to see the accommodation, understand how things work, and feel confident ahead of the break.

To arrange a visit, please contact HopScotch Children's Charity on: 0131 336 5554 or 07771 762071 to agree a suitable time.

The Support Worker's role

As a support worker, you are responsible for the safety, wellbeing, and enjoyment of the children and young people at all times.

A typical day at HopScotch will include:

- Supporting children during activity sessions
- Taking part in activities alongside them
- Providing general care and supervision

The HopScotch Activity Leader will work with you to plan each day's programme. During activities, you will help where needed and encourage children to join in. You do not need to be an expert, but a positive "have-a-go" attitude is very important, as you will often be joining in with the activities yourself.

Between activities and mealtimes, you will keep children busy with games and fun activities while also looking after their welfare.

This includes:

- Supervising and entertaining children while travelling in the minibus (for example, playing games or singing songs)
- Supervising children at all times in the house, play areas, and grounds
- Making sure children are dressed appropriately for the weather and activities
- Organising evening activities (we can provide scavenger hunts, treasure trails, and arts and crafts materials)
- Making sure things are calm and quiet once children go to bed

As well as supervising 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 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 attention to: -

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

Please ensure the children have brought all their medication before you leave for Ardvullin.

Daily Responsibilities

In addition to supervising the children, you will also be responsible for:

- Preparing all meals for the young people and ensuring their dietary needs are met.
- Ensuring medication is taken and that each young person has the correct medication with them for any day trips.
- Providing suitable food and drinks for all young people during day trips and outings.
- Maintaining cleanliness and tidiness throughout the house to create a safe and welcoming environment.

The house will be clean and ready for you on arrival. We kindly ask that you leave it in a similar condition when you depart.

For health and safety reasons, the house should be kept tidy throughout the day. This includes:

- Hanging waterproofs to dry and ensuring wellies are cleaned and dried
- Bringing outdoor toys and play equipment inside overnight

- Mopping up wet floors after showers

Children should be encouraged to respect the building, equipment, and facilities at all times.

Please report any breakages or damage to the Activity Leader as soon as possible.

Medication

Please make sure that all children bring any medication they need before travelling to Ardvullin.

THE RESPITE CENTRE

Ardvullin, HopScotch's Holiday Centre

Ardvullin is in **Ardgour on the Ardnamurchan Peninsula**, reached by crossing the Corran Ferry just north of Ballachulish, about 8 miles south of Fort William. It sits in **five acres of private grounds** and looks out over **Loch Linnhe**.

Activity Centre and Playground

Our purpose-built **Activity Centre** is located within the Ardvullin grounds. It offers a range of indoor activities such as climbing, yoga, sports, and games.

We will use this facility for at least **one full day**, helping to reduce travel time and keep our environmental impact low.

The **adventure playground** includes:

- A 30-metre flying fox
- Clatter bridge
- Tyre traverse ladder
- Scramble net
- Gravity bowl and rota bounce

Children must always be supervised in the playground.

For safety:

- Only **one child at a time** may use the flying fox
- Only **one person at a time** may use the trampoline
- The trampoline net must be closed
- **No flips** are allowed on the trampoline

These rules help reduce the risk of injury.

Accommodation

We aim to make Ardvullin as comfortable and welcoming as possible.

The house includes:

- Separate bunk rooms for boys and girls
- Individual bedrooms for male and female staff
- Bright, spacious rooms
- Separate shower rooms for males and females
- One staff room with en-suite facilities
- A washing machine and drying racks

Each bed is provided with:

- Duvet and pillow
 - Sheet and mattress protector
 - Bed linen
-

Kitchen

The large, fully equipped kitchen has everything needed for self-catering, including:

- Electric cooker and AGA
 - Microwave
 - Fridge/freezer
 - Dishwasher
 - Pots, pans, crockery, cutlery, utensils, and baking equipment
-

Waste and Toilets

Please sort your recycling and rinse bottles, cartons, and cans before placing them in the correct bins beside the house.

Do **not** flush wipes, sanitary products, or cotton wool pads down the toilet. Ardvullin uses a **septic tank**, and these items can cause blockages. Blockages can create unpleasant situations for guests and extra costs for **HopScotch Children's Charity**.

Thank you for helping us keep Ardvullin clean and working well for everyone.

THE RESPITE BREAK

Luggage

Space on the bus is limited, so each person should bring one average-sized sports bag.

Please pack food in cardboard boxes or carrier bags, which will then be moved into crates on the bus.

We provide helpful packing checklists for both adults and children.

If you would like to use cool boxes for food during the journey, please let us know in advance.

The Journey

The bus driver will collect your group from the agreed pick-up point. The usual departure time is 11.00am on Monday.

Before leaving, please make sure:

- All luggage and food are ready to be loaded
- Children and young people have been to the toilet

For everyone's safety, the following rules must be followed on the minibus:

- Everyone (including adults) must wear a seatbelt while the bus is moving
- Heads and arms must be kept inside the bus
- The driver must not be distracted
- No rubbish should be thrown from the windows
- The driver must not be left alone in charge of the children during stops

Food should not be eaten on the bus (except boiled sweets).

There will be at least two stops during the journey – one for lunch and, depending on the distance travelled, another short break.

All children should bring a packed lunch and drink.

Journey time depends on distance, weather, and traffic.

Towards the end of the journey, the bus will cross the Corran Ferry, about 8 miles south of Fort William. The crossing takes around 5 minutes, and the ferry runs every half hour.

Arrival

When you arrive at Ardvullin, the HopScotch Activity Leader will:

- Show you around the house and grounds
- Go through the house rules
- Answer any questions
- Talk through the week's activities
- Discuss any important information about the children

As groups usually arrive late on Monday afternoon, you will not travel out again until Tuesday morning.

After dinner on Monday, there is usually a short walk to help everyone stretch their legs and get to know the area.

Each child will be provided with:

- Wellies
- Waterproof clothing
- A backpack
- A scrapbook and hat to keep

We also provide wetsuits and beach shoes for beach visits.

Daily Activities

Now that we have a new Activity Centre, we can offer many activities on site. To reduce travel and be more environmentally friendly, we limit how much time is spent on the road.

We ask each group to choose two off-site activities in advance. We will then plan a balanced programme including:

- Your chosen off-site activities
- Activity Centre sessions
- Local beach visits and walks

Please select your two preferred activities on the Holiday Activities Form and return it at least four weeks before the holiday.

Offsite activities

- Canoeing – at Glencoe Outdoor Centre in Loch Linnhe led by an experienced instructor (journey time – 30 mins) – **Please note the centre requires 4 weeks' notice to book and is subject to instructors' availability.**
- Horse-riding – children & Young people can enjoy being escorted on lead rein pony rides at Achnalarig Farm in Oban. (Journey time – one hour).
- Ardgour Alpaca and Boer Goat Experience – meet alpacas, brush and walk the Shetland ponies and meet, play with Boer Goats. (journey time – 5 mins)
- Gondola (cable car) to the top of Aonach Mor, next to Ben Nevis and a walk to the viewpoint (journey time – 40 mins).
- Segway. A magic carpet experience, balancing on a platform. Exploring the Highland Estate. This activity is run by Woodlands based in Ballachulish (journey time - 20 mins). Not suitable for children under 9.
- Tubing (available from April 2026 onwards) – slide down the hill side on an inflatable ring whilst enjoying the beautiful setting of Glencoe Ski Centre available from April 2024 (journey time – 40 mins).

On-Site Activities

At our fantastic on-site Activity Centre, we offer a wide selection of engaging activities led by our experienced Activity Leaders. Additional sessions can also be arranged where available.

Activities include:

- Indoor climbing and scrambling on our new mixed-ability climbing wall. This is a supervised activity and must be monitored by HopScotch or partner organisation staff at all times. The climbing wall will be closed when not in use. Climbing shoes are provided.
- Orienteering
- Burn Bashing
- Yoga, facilitated by a qualified yoga instructor
- Volleyball, badminton, basketball and indoor football (equipment provided)
- Games sessions, facilitated by HopScotch staff and volunteers
- Bushcraft activities
- Biking, using ramps and other specialist equipment
- Team challenges

Our activities are designed to be inclusive, confidence-building and, most importantly, fun — with safety always at the heart of everything we do.

Off-Site Activities

Groups can choose two off-site activities from the list below:

- Canoeing – at Glencoe Outdoor Centre on Loch Linnhe, led by a qualified instructor
(Journey time: approx. 30 minutes – must be booked at least 4 weeks in advance and depends on instructor availability)
- Horse Riding – lead-rein pony rides at Achnalarig Farm in Oban
(Journey time: approx. 1 hour)

- Ardgour Alpaca and Boer Goat Experience – meet alpacas, brush and walk Shetland ponies, and meet friendly goats
(Journey time: approx. 5 minutes)
 - Gondola Ride (Cable Car) – to the top of Aonach Mòr, near Ben Nevis, followed by a walk to the viewpoint
(Journey time: approx. 40 minutes)
 - Segway Experience – explore the Highland Estate with Woodlands
(Journey time: approx. 20 minutes – not suitable for children under 9)
 - Tubing – slide down a hillside on an inflatable ring at Glencoe Ski Centre
(Available from late June – journey time: approx. 40 minutes)
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Local Attractions

During the week, groups may visit some lovely nearby places, including:

- Sallachan Beach – a beautiful beach just 5 minutes' drive from Ardvullin
- Ardtoe Beach – a sheltered bay about 1 hour's drive from Ardvullin
- Ariundle Forest – a riverside woodland walk, great for spotting frogs and plants
(approx. 30 minutes' drive)
- Inchree Waterfalls – a short walk to see spectacular waterfalls *(about 5 minutes from the ferry exit)*
- Castle Tioram – a sandy beach below a castle, ideal for games or kite flying
(about 1 hour's drive)

What to Bring on Day Trips

On days with off-site activities, groups usually leave Ardvullin at 9.45am.

Children should bring:

- Wellies
- Waterproofs
- Backpacks

In summer, the sun can be strong, especially at the beach. We provide sunscreen, and partner organisation staff must make sure children use it.

For beach visits:

- Buoyancy aids must be worn
- We provide wetsuits

Staffing and Supervision

A minimum of three staff aged 18+ must accompany up to 12 children on day trips. The lead member of staff must take part in all activities.

The HopScotch Activity Leader will organise and guide the daily programme. However, they are not responsible for supervising the children and must never be left in sole charge.

Midges

HopScotch provides the following items to help keep everyone comfortable while enjoying the outdoors:

- Midge nets
- Wristbands
- Insect repellent

These are available to support a safe and enjoyable experience for all.

The Evenings

Organising evening activities is the responsibility of the visiting staff team.

Children and young people are usually happy to:

- Play on the adventure playground
- Have a game of football
- Use the Activity Centre

All children must be supervised at all times, whether they are indoors or outside.

Some groups need more structure in the evenings. We can provide:

- Scavenger hunts
- Treasure trails
- Arts and crafts
- Indoor games

A yoga session will be arranged on either Tuesday or Wednesday evening, unless you have asked not to take part.

If you take the children for an evening walk, please be respectful of:

- Local residents
- Wildlife
- The surrounding environment

Please keep noise levels low and use the designated paths.

Bedtime

Bedtime is decided by your staff team and will depend on the age of the children. We recommend:

- Bedtime at around 9.30pm
- Lights out by 10.00pm

Setting a clear bedtime before the holiday helps children know what to expect and prevents tiredness and upset the next day.

Catering

HopScotch breaks are self-catering. You are responsible for planning and preparing meals.

What usually works well:

Breakfast (around 8.30am):

- Cereal, toast, bacon or vegetarian alternative, rolls

Packed lunch:

- Sandwiches
- Fruit
- Drink

Cool bags and rucksacks are provided. Cool boxes and flasks are also available.

Evening meal (around 6.30pm):

- Simple meals such as pasta, pizza, curry, bbq.

Supper before bed:

- Hot chocolate and toast

Please make sure you bring enough drinks for journeys and day trips so CYP stay hydrated.

Shopping

We recommend buying most food for the week in advance and topping up during one day trip if needed.

If shopping during the week:

- At least two staff members must stay with the children
- Please avoid long shopping trips

Some groups involve children in making packed lunches or evening meals. A BBQ is available and we are happy to help set it up. However, under health and safety rules, HopScotch staff cannot cook the food.

Food Delivery

Morrisons can deliver groceries directly to Ardvullin. If using this service, please book delivery after your arrival on Monday. [Home page - Morrisons - Online Food Shopping & Grocery Delivery - Morrisons](#)

Ardgour Brewery can deliver burgers and chips to Ardvullin. Orders can be placed on Monday for delivery on Wednesday or Thursday evening.

Menu options include:

- Beef burgers
- Veggie and vegan burgers
- Venison burgers
- Chips

(Full price list can be provided separately.)

Pocket Money

We recommend that children and young people do not bring pocket money on their HopScotch break.

This helps to:

- Keep things fair for everyone
- Stop money being spent on sweets and fizzy drinks
- Avoid children worrying about losing their money

There are very few shops nearby, so it is much easier for children to leave any spare money at home.

Behaviour Guidelines

We want this break to be a happy and positive experience for all children and young people. For many, this will be their first holiday away from home, and they may feel very excited.

Discipline is the responsibility of the visiting staff team.

We recommend that you:

- Set clear ground rules before the holiday
- Talk these through with the children
- Apply them consistently

HopScotch Children's Charity is proud of its good reputation, and we want children to show their best behaviour at Ardvullin and on trips out.

Let's work together to make this a fun and memorable week for everyone.

Going Home

You will usually leave Ardvullin at around 9.30am on Friday.

Before leaving, please make sure:

- Beds are stripped (mattress protectors only if dirty)
- All rooms are left clean and tidy
- Everyone checks they have all their belongings
- The fridge is emptied and any opened food is thrown away

If there is any unopened food left, we will try to donate it to a local food bank.

The bus driver will take you back to your collection point.

There will be at least one stop on the journey home, including a lunch break if needed.

We usually aim to have groups home between 1.00pm and 2.00pm on Friday. Please check the return time with the Activity Leader or minibus driver before confirming a time with parents.

Going Home

You will typically be leaving for home at about 9.30 am on Friday. We ask that the beds are stripped (except for the mattress protectors unless they are dirty) 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. We ask that you empty the fridge for health and safety purposes and discard any opened food. If you wish to leave unopened food in the kitchen, we will try and donate it to a local food bank. Our bus driver will return you to the collection point, and there will be at least one stop on the way home, including a break for lunch if required.

We usually try and get you home between 1-2 pm on Fridays, but please check with our Activity Leader/minibus driver before confirming a time with parents.

Health & Safety

HopScotch Children's Charity is committed to keeping all children, staff, and volunteers safe.

While HopScotch manages the safety of the centre and activities, the visiting organisation remains responsible for the day-to-day care of the children.

HopScotch has full Health & Safety policies in place, including risk assessments for:

- The house and grounds
- The minibus
- All activities

Copies of these, along with our Child Protection Policy, are included in this pack.

Fire and Emergency Safety

Fire and safety rules will be explained when you arrive.

All adults must know:

- Fire exits
- Emergency procedures
- Evacuation plans

A fire drill will be carried out on the first day.

To meet fire regulations:

- The house must be kept tidy
 - Corridors and exits must always be clear
-

Medical Services

We work with a local GP and have clear instructions displayed at Ardvullin for:

- GP services
- Nearest Accident & Emergency department

Any child who asks to see a doctor will be supported to do so.

The nearest defibrillator is located in Clovullin at Ardgour Memorial Hall and is available 24/7.

Medicines

All medicines (including those brought by children), except inhalers, are kept in a locked cupboard. HopScotch staff hold the main key, and one named person from the visiting organisation will:

- Store medicines
- Give medicines
- Keep a duplicate key

First Aid

HopScotch Activity Leaders are fully trained in first aid. At least one member of your staff must also be first aid trained.

First aid kits are carried on the minibus and during activities. Any accident or illness must be recorded, even if minor, and a copy sent to the HopScotch office.

Swimming and Beach Safety

Before swimming or beach activities:

- There must be enough adults to supervise
 - At least one adult must be in the water with the Activity Leader
 - Safety signs must always be followed
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Smoking, Alcohol and Drugs

Ardvullin is a smoke-free site, including the minibus. Staff who smoke will be shown a smoking area away from children.

There must be no alcohol at Ardvullin at any time. Staff must not drink alcohol while on duty.

All non-prescription drugs and controlled substances are banned. Anyone found with these will be removed from Ardvullin.

Weapons

Any offensive weapon is strictly forbidden, including:

- Knives
- Air guns
- BB guns
- Catapults
- Swords
- Crossbows

Anyone found with a weapon will be removed from Ardvullin immediately.

Children Leaving Without Permission

Children are not allowed to leave the centre without permission. If this happens, staff must inform HopScotch staff immediately and follow safety procedures to protect the child.

Child Protection

HopScotch takes child protection very seriously. All staff and volunteers are checked by Disclosure Scotland.

If there are any concerns about a child's safety, HopScotch will work fully with the appropriate authorities.

Feedback and Complaints

HopScotch welcomes feedback from parents and partner organisations. You can contact us by phone, and written feedback is encouraged for full consideration.

Finally

HopScotch aims to give every child a safe, happy, and memorable break. Although the work can be demanding, it is also rewarding and helps children build confidence, friendships, and lasting memories.