

## Gruffalo Orienteering Course Information for group leaders

An orienteering course involves participants navigating around a course of 'controls' using a map. Ideally controls must be visited in a given order, although participants decide on and follow their own route. This pack includes the information necessary to ensure a safe and successful orienteering experience at Westonbirt Arboretum.

### The Controls

Westonbirt has a permanent course situated in the Old Arboretum. It comprises of a number of fixed controls, which consist of a coloured panel fixed to a post. Each control point is numbered so you can re-orientate yourself as you follow the course. Each panel features characters from the Gruffalo story and information about woodland wildlife.

### The course

The course aims to provide young children with a safe introduction to orienteering – while also encouraging further exploration of the arboretum. The course starts from the Welcome Building.

- There are 12 controls to find
- Most controls are located on or near paths or at natural play activity locations
- It requires basic understanding of map orientation and common map symbols
- Suitable for Reception and KS1 groups
- For Pre-school groups we would recommend a shorter route of seven control points, either:
  - (i) 1-7, which will also include a visit to the Gruffalo statue
  - (ii) 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 11, 12, which will bring you to the central facilities area and picnic tables
- Time: 45 mins – 1 ¼ hours – allow an additional 10 mins to return to the Welcome Building

### Points to watch

- \* 1 – this is off path and across long grass, situated between two mature oak trees
- \* 2 – as you walk along Mitchell Drive, look out for the Holm oak, an evergreen oak, head underneath the branches and beyond
- \* 4 – if you've visited the 'Felled Giant' play stop before, you'll be able to find this stop quite easily. Look for the giant felled tree trunk from Pool Avenue
- \* 11 – look inside the bamboo

**We strongly recommend that you walk the course to familiarise yourself with locations before bringing your group.**

## Preparing for your visit

### What should the children bring?

The orienteering course cover a variety of terrain, and therefore it is vital that students are dressed appropriately. As a minimum children will need:

- Sensible waterproof footwear with non-slip soles
- Clothing suitable for weather conditions – waterproof coat, jumper, hat and gloves in the winter, sun hat and sun screen in summer
- A drink and snack

A compass is not necessary for successful completion of our courses

### Before your visit

It would be useful for students to have a look at the map before they come and practice using the key

### On the day

We recommend taking the group to control point 1 together so they can see what to look for as they explore with their group adult.

- Talk about ground conditions, for example nettles and brambles, and taking care to avoid treading on our wild flowers
- Issue at least one orienteering map per small group
- Give each adult a seasonal map (available from the Welcome Building or outside the Great Oak Hall in the central facilities area). The seasonal map includes path names which may be useful.
- Brief the adults and children about the course you expect them to follow
- Give a time limit for the orienteering activity and a meeting point
- Brief adults and children on what to do and where to go if their group gets lost.
- The Gruffalo Orientation course is based in the Old Arboretum, a dog-free area.

### Health and Safety

A sample risk assessment for the course is attached. **For further details please contact the Learning Team on 0300 067 4856, [learning.westonbirt.@forestry.gov.uk](mailto:learning.westonbirt.@forestry.gov.uk)**

Lastly please ensure that all your helpers understand their specific roles.

## What are the lines and colours on the map?

As with any other map, the symbols and colours on our orienteering map represent different features in the landscape. However, although these symbols are easy to recognise they are NOT necessarily the same as those found on a standard Ordnance Survey map. It is therefore valuable to go through the map with students to ensure they understand the map before sending them out on a course.

### The Colours

There are five basic colours on orienteering maps:

- Black** Often represents 'man made' features such as buildings, walls, bins and fences. It is also used to represent rock features and boulders. Paths and tracks are also shown in black, but not roads, which are shown in brown.
- Green** Various shades of green represent different types of woodland. Often the shade of green indicates how easy or difficult it is to move through. For example, light green or white areas are suitable for running or walking through, whereas dark green areas indicate thick, dense bushes or scrub and are best avoided.
- Yellow** Indicates open areas. Bright yellow usually represents open area such as playing fields or larger open spaces. Pale yellow is often used to show thinly wooded areas or rough grassland that may be less accessible.
- Brown** Pale brown normally indicates a hard or artificial surface such as gravel, tarmac and playgrounds etc.
- Blue** As with other maps, blue represents water such as rivers, ponds, streams and lakes.

### The Lines

All orienteering maps have parallel lines drawn vertically on the map. The tops of these lines have an arrow indicating magnetic north. These lines will only be relevant if using a compass.

## Risk Assessment for Orienteering

This risk assessment is provided as guidance only. It contains the specific risks associated with using the orienteering courses in the Old Arboretum (NB: separate risk assessments covering the general risks associated with visiting the arboretum are also available on request).

It is your responsibility to carry out your own assessment. For further guidance please telephone 0300 067 4856. We recommend a pre-visit if you are unfamiliar with the Old Arboretum.

Location	Old Arboretum, Westonbirt National Arboretum	
Activity	Gruffalo Orienteering Course	
Persons at risk	Young children, adult helpers, school staff, members of the public, special needs groups,	
Emergency Numbers		
Emergency Services	999	
Westonbirt Arboretum	0300 067 4891	
Tetbury Hospital	(01666) 502336	
<b>HAZARDS</b>	<b>LEVEL OF RISK (LOW, MEDIUM or HIGH)</b>	
Outside Environment		
1. Terrain – trips, slips and falls	1. Low	
2. Weather	2. Low	
3. Woodland pools	3. Medium	
Dogs		
1. Dog faeces	1. Medium	
2. Attack by dogs	2. Low	
Missing participants or marshals	Medium	
Supervision and personal safety	Medium	
<b>RISK CONTROL MEASURES</b>		
Hazard		
Terrain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course is planned to avoid steep areas.</li> <li>• Ensure adequate adult supervision (see supervision and personal safety)</li> <li>• Children must wear appropriate shoes</li> <li>• Trail conditions are monitored regularly to ensure they are maintained, particularly after severe weather</li> <li>• In wet conditions group leader should specify that students walk rather than run around courses.</li> </ul>	

Weather	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants must bring appropriate clothing and footwear – as a minimum a warm jumper, hat, gloves and waterproof coat should be brought while in the summer a water bottle would also be advisable.</li> <li>• Spare clothing must be brought by school leader</li> <li>• Choose an appropriate course for your group (see general guidance)</li> <li>• Participants should be clearly briefed about weather in preliminary safety talk.</li> </ul>
Woodland pools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Between control point 3 and 4 you will walk past the dew pond. This area is not fenced off so include in your safety talk</li> </ul>
Missing participants or officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The perimeter of the Old Arboretum is defined by walls/fences and children should be clearly briefed about boundaries in preliminary safety talk.</li> <li>• The school leader must bring a student list and ensure everyone has returned.</li> <li>• Ensure adequate adult supervision (see supervision and personal safety)</li> <li>• The arboretum has an emergency procedure for lost persons and this will be deployed in the event of a missing participant.</li> </ul>
Supervision and personal safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An accompanying teacher/helper will have the responsibility as a back marker when walking along trails</li> <li>• A clear finish time and meeting place should be set before participants start the courses.</li> <li>• Children should be made aware of appropriate behaviour at the start of the day</li> <li>• The group leader must carry safety equipment including; first aid kit and mobile phone.</li> <li>• Supervision ratios will fulfil LEA guidelines – we recommend a minimum of 1:4 adults:children for EYFS and 1:5 adults:children for KS1</li> <li>• Group leaders could wear a bib to ensure they are easily recognisable.</li> </ul>