

NATIONAL SCHOOLS 25



Risk Assessment

Date:	16/11/2025
-------	------------

Assessors Name:	Holly Mobbs	Review Date:	In advance of event - October/November 2025
-----------------	-------------	--------------	---

Description of assessment	The National School Canoe Championships involve racing in 200m, 500m, 10km and 15km distances at Hawley Lake.. Hawley Lake is a 45 acre lake (80m x 600m approx), and would fall into the Paddle UK definition of Sheltered Water. The racing courses will be set out as a series of buoys within a defined area on the lake and clearly communicated to participants and team leaders. <i>Canoeing and Kayaking are “Assumed Risk”- “Water Contact Sports” that may carry attendant risks. Participants and Team Leaders should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions and involvement.</i>
---------------------------	---

Location Details	Hawley Lake 3, RSME Regt, Gibraltar Barracks, Blackwater, Camberley
------------------	---



NATIONAL SCHOOLS 25

Risk Assessment

GU17 9LP

[W3W - risk.tired.printout](#)

What are the hazards?	Who might be harmed and how?	What are you already doing to control the risks?	What further action do you need to take to control the risks?	Who needs to carry out the action?	When is the action needed by?	Done
Vehicle traffic accessing the site causing injuring to someone - particularly around minibuses and trailers.	Participants, spectators and public in vehicles or walking near vehicles.	All drivers of minibuses and trailers are experienced and signed off by relevant schools to drive. Team leaders will take responsibility for their students throughout the event.	Event Organisers to monitor parking and access at intervals during the event.	Event Organisers.	At regular intervals throughout the event.	
Injury caused by collision with competitors carrying boats and kit from car	Public, participants, marshals and spectators	All parking will be in easy access of the lake – no through roads to be crossed.	Event Organisers to monitor parking and access at intervals during the event.	Event Organisers.	At regular intervals throughout the event.	

NATIONAL SCHOOLS 25



Risk Assessment

park to access the lake.		Care to be taken crossing the car park regardless. Team leaders will take responsibility for their students throughout the event.				
Injury caused by litter, debris or hazardous items on or near the competitor area or Race Start.	All	Pre-race clean up of site by team on site. Venue is a closed, private site, apart from car park, so should be relatively clean and tidy.	Event Organisers/Marshall team to do a final check of site in the morning of the event.	Event Organisers/Marshall team as delegated by event organisers.	Before 9am on morning of the event.	
Injury caused by collision with competitors whilst running with boats at portages	Participants, marshals and spectators/supporters	Nominated marshal will be positioned at the portage to control the passage of people. The portage area will be sectioned off and will have restricted access.	Nominated marshal will supervise portage area and restrict access to supporters so it does not get too busy. All competitors are advised to exercise care and attention at portage.	Nominated marshall.	During afternoon marathon race.	

NATIONAL SCHOOLS 25



Risk Assessment

			Support Crew advised to exercise appropriate caution at portage.			
Competitors being injured by running barefoot at portages	Participants	Debris on the ground and in the water next to the portage will be cleared the day morning of the event. Competitors are encouraged to wear shoes during race briefing.	There are qualified First Aiders available to assist if required.	Chief first aider.	In event of injury.	
Hazards due to weather conditions (sudden high winds or lightning during the race)	Participants, marshals and organisers	The Race Organisers will monitor the weather forecast in the days prior to the race. If lightning is forecast, race organisers should review timings of the race and adjust accordingly.	If the weather is so inclement (thunder / hail etc), the race organisers will make a decision to either adjust (remove the portage) or postpone or cancel the race. If the wind goes above 25mph, the event is cancelled.	Event organisers.	On the day.	

NATIONAL SCHOOLS 25



Risk Assessment

		Prevailing weather conditions make this risk negligible. School Team Leaders have ultimate responsibility for their pupils, and whether or not they consider them competent to participate in racing in prevailing conditions.	If lightning strikes occur within 30 seconds of thunder, race is suspended for at least 30 minutes after thunder stops and participants must take shelter off the water.			
Difficulty of paddler being able to access an easy point on the lake edge to get out of the water	Participants and marshals	Crews are in constant line of sight throughout the event. Safety boats will be on the water to support crews to safely self-rescue. The banks around the lake are mostly beaches or shallow so easy to self-rescue on too.	Radio communication will be used between relevant event staff if crew in line of sight is struggling and not able to be supported by marshals in area.	Event safe.	In the event of incident.	

NATIONAL SCHOOLS 25



Risk Assessment

		All participants will be wearing buoyancy aids and their boats will have buoyancy too.				
Problems caused by poor ability of paddlers/ inexperienced paddlers	Participants	Pre-race information states that “Team Leaders are responsible for ensuring that paddlers are properly equipped having taken into account the paddler’s health, fitness, capability, the course, the prevailing conditions and other risks associated with this race”. There will be safety boats on the water to help swimmers out of the water. Throw lines will be within the safety boats and all	If race organisers are concerned about the quality of a crew, they do have the ultimate power to stop that crew from returning to the lake for the afternoon session.	Race Organisers	On the day.	

NATIONAL SCHOOLS 25



Risk Assessment

		participants will be wearing buoyancy aids. All paddlers will be in constant line of sight with someone. In addition, all boats will be checked for adequate buoyancy to ensure that every boat competing is in a fit and proper state.				
Hazard due to poor fitness or medical condition of paddlers	Participants	School Team Leaders have ultimate responsibility for their pupils and must communicate pre-existing medical conditions that will make organisers aware. It is the responsibility of team leaders to do this. Marshals on the course will monitor for any problems	If race organisers are concerned about the quality of a crew, they do have the ultimate power to stop that crew from returning to the lake for the afternoon session.	Race Organisers	On the day.	

NATIONAL SCHOOLS 25



Risk Assessment

		with paddlers and take appropriate action				
Paddlers requiring rescue (from capsize etc)	Participants	There will be safety boats on the water to help swimmers out of the water and radio communication between key personal.				
Taking care of stragglers who are not in the main racing group	Participants	All crews will be in constant line of sight to a marshal and safety boat will follow the last boat off the course with radio communication to support.				
Risk of hypothermia Risk of heat exhaustion and dehydration	Participants, marshals and spectators	If conditions are poor then paddlers will be advised regarding wearing appropriate clothing at the race briefing. Team Leaders and paddlers will be required to have suitable	First Aiders will be available to assist if required. Marshals will have access to a basic first aid kit which will include a survival bag or blanket. Marshals will monitor participants and pull any crew that is showing signs of	Race organisers.	If required.	

NATIONAL SCHOOLS 25



Risk Assessment

(sun exposure, heatstroke)		spare clothing. Survival blankets will be available at race control. Prevailing weather conditions make this risk negligible. Drinking water points will be available on the site. Competitors have support teams who are able to supply dry, warm clothing, as well as access to warm showers and facilities in Hawley Lake Sail Training Centre. Heat exhaustion is low risk due to the November date of the event.	either hypothermia or heat exhaustion. If a participant does become severely hypothermic or suffering from heat stroke, the emergency services will be consulted by the race organisers.			
----------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

NATIONAL SCHOOLS 25



Risk Assessment

Risk of fatigue resulting in inability to look after themselves on the water safely	All participants	All participants to be monitored by event marshals and their team leaders for signs of fatigue. Team leader is expected to ensure all participants are prepared for the event in terms of fitness in advance.	If a crew is judged to be unable to look after themselves due to fatigue (stumbling on the portage, struggling to consistently paddle), team leader or marshall can remove them from the course.	Event marshals and/or team leaders	On the day.	
Cold water shock from sudden immersion in cold water (below 15 degrees)	All participants	All participants are required to wear a buoyancy aid and will be within line of sight of a marshall or safety boat at all times. Team leaders are aware of risk from cold water shock.				
Inappropriate or unsafe equipment	All participants and event marshalls	All boats are expected to have buoyancy that would support the crew in the event of a capsize. It is the	If equipment is deemed by event staff to be inappropriate or unsafe, the crew will be pulled from racing.	Event organiser and/or delegated marshal	On the day.	

NATIONAL SCHOOLS 25



Risk Assessment

		responsibility of the team leader to ensure participants equipment is safe and appropriate for the participants to use. Event marshals will do random checks on equipment used.				
Collisions with other competitors or crafts (sailing boats, swimmers etc)	Participants and public	Other lake users have been informed about the race. Paddlers will be reminded to be aware of all other users and give them space. Any users of the lake will be encouraged to stay off the racing course.	If swimmers are spotted on the course, lake staff will advise them to vacate the course.	Race organisers and lake staff.	On the day, if required.	
Low visibility conditions (fog, glare)	All water users (participants particularly)	Buoyancy aids encouraged. Visibility is monitored by race organisers.	If visibility is so reduced that line of sight cannot be maintained, course is either shortened or the event is cancelled.	Event organisers	On the day	

NATIONAL SCHOOLS 25



Risk Assessment

Wildlife interactions (e.g. nesting birds, swans)	Participants on the water	The course will be checked to avoid any known nesting areas as required. The course will be checked in advance for any aggressive swans. There is no indication of aggressive swans.	If necessary, participants will be briefed on the hazard and marshals will be placed where swans/nesting birds are.	Race organisers.	On the day.	
Overhanging trees	Participants	Participants will be encouraged to stay clear of any overhanging trees.	If the overhang is deemed dangerous to the participants by the race organisers on the day then either hazard tape will be used to mark the overhang or the race will be cancelled or the course amended.	Race organisers.	On the day.	
Pollution (including animal and bird waste/excreta)	Participants and Spectators	Removable debris at portage areas will be cleared the morning of the race. The lake is constantly	If pollution is deemed to be of such a high state or deemed dangerous by the race	Race Organisers.	In the week before the event.	No such hazards have been identified in

NATIONAL SCHOOLS 25



Risk Assessment

		monitored for pollution due to its active use as a sailing lake. Water and riverbank animal/bird faeces can not realistically be removed. Therefore, all briefings will make public announcements advising people to regularly wash their hands prior to touching their face, any food item, any drink or should they touch any waste, excreta, and/or hazardous items.	organisers then the Event will be cancelled.			pre-race checks.
Provision of Toilets / hygiene	Participants and spectators	Sufficient toilets are available on the site. Toilets will be clean at the start of the day and checked		Lake staff.	Throughout the day.	

NATIONAL SCHOOLS 25



Risk Assessment

		a number of times during the day.				
Food poisoning	Participants and spectators	Food will be prepared in clean and hygienic conditions. Catering is being provided by Sail Training Centre on site.				
Burns/scalds	Participants, organisers and spectators	Hot food provision is being offered by an on site cafe. Any hot food or drink will be given in appropriate packaging.	Qualified First Aiders will be available to assist if required.	Chief first aider.	As required.	
Contact details for emergency response	Participants	The race organiser will have access to the contact details of the emergency services, and all marshals/volunteers via volunteer sign-up form.		Race organiser.	As required.	



NATIONAL SCHOOLS 25

Risk Assessment

		A telephone list will be prepared prior to the race.				
Access for emergency vehicles	Participants and spectators	There is access to the event area for emergency vehicles. This will be kept clear. Marshalls will be sent to the entrance when emergency services are called to help them navigate access. The Emergency Services have in the past gained access to this location and are fully aware of the conditions.		Allocated marshall.	As required.	
First Aid coverage	Participants and spectators	The Marathon Racing Committee First Aid kit will be available for qualified marshalls to use as required. The site also has				



NATIONAL SCHOOLS 25

Risk Assessment

		its own stocked first aid kit with qualified staff available.				
Communication between Marshalls	Participants	One of the organisers has been designated to co-ordinate all the marshals and to make sure all safety issues are communicated between them. Some key personal are allocated radios to support communication throughout the races.				
Paddler and Participant Protection: (Child and Vulnerable paddler safeguarding)	All on site.	The site is closed and private. Team Leaders are responsible for their students throughout the day. Holly Mobbs, MRC Welfare Officer, will be in attendance on the day to support any safeguarding				

NATIONAL SCHOOLS 25



Risk Assessment

		concerns. She will be pointed out to all at race briefing. Paddle UK Welfare/Safeguarding policies and procedures will be followed if or when required. Changing rooms will be clearly marked as Under 18's only and adult only for both men and women. Highlight to team leaders in pre-race briefings their responsibility to supervised and account for all of their paddlers (and family members) as per the schools own safeguarding procedures.				
--	--	---	--	--	--	--

NATIONAL SCHOOLS 25



Risk Assessment

		No risk of communication with minors digitally. All communication through school staff and team leaders.				
Equipment Risks in Race Control (e.g. wires, computer issues etc.)	Paddlers, Spectators, Marshalls and Race Control team	Equipment will only be kept with race control and all wires will be carefully managed throughout the day. Wires will be appropriately laid out and care will be taken when moving around the equipment.	Appropriate hazard tape and wire covers can be used if needed.	Race Organisers.	On the day.	
Issues with misconduct and disputes	All participants, event organisers and marshalls.	Clear communication on suitable behaviour. The event runs on the Marathon Racing Rules and any issues with behaviour or				

NATIONAL SCHOOLS 25



Risk Assessment

		misconduct is clearly communicated on consequences (penalties or disqualification.). Any team leaders who wish to submit a complaint around misconduct or dispute a marshalling decision can do so via the race organiser on the day.				
Lack of clarity on post-incident process	Event organisers and marshalls	Paper and pens available in race control for report to be filled out post incident by relevant event organisers and/or marshalls. This is communicated to volunteers in pre-event email.	Event organisers to check marshalls understand process.	Event organisers.	In the morning of the event.	

NATIONAL SCHOOLS 25



Risk Assessment

Photography/videography consent issues	All	Photography/Videography consent is gained on entry forms and any issues with photography/videography will be communicated to race organisers via the entry form by participants and/or their team leader in advance of the event. No social media posts should be made through official channels without race organisers agreement.	If any posts do get published where consent has not been given, posts will be removed as soon as noticed and processes reviewed.	Event organisers and welfare officers.	As required.	
--	-----	---	--	--	--------------	--