

Covid Secure Risk Assessment – School Fossil Hunting Walks

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Signature:  Date: 10/9/2020

Approved by Jan Coleman (Secretary of the Trustees):

Signature:  Date: 11/9/2020

Introduction

The Centre runs 2-hour guided fossil hunting walks for up to 1 school bubble at a time, as per guidelines from the UK government and our licence from the landowner. These sessions are booked in advance and contact details including email and phone number of the school are required and can be used for the purposes of Track and Trace. There is a short video on our website outlining the safety measures for these events which is available to view before booking. On the completion of a booking a briefing video is sent to the group, explaining about the local fossils and beach safety. This briefing video is way of minimising contact between the Warden running the event and the participants, as usually we would spend 45 minutes doing this introductory talk and film inside the Heritage Centre.

The Warden meets the participants at a prearranged time at the railings next to the Heritage Centre and the whole session takes place in the outdoor environment. All sessions are tide dependant.

Schools are asked not to attend if anyone in their group is displaying symptoms of Covid-19 and the Centre will issue a full refund.

The Centre has licences from both the National Trust and Charmouth Parish Council to conduct fossil hunting walks and has public liability insurance cover of £5 million.

Social distancing will take place throughout the event and the Wardens have the right to end the session if they feel that this is not being adhered to. A distance of 2m between the Wardens and participants will be maintained, but this distance can be reduced to 1m+ for short periods as the risk of infection is considered to be lower in an outdoor environment. The Wardens will carry a face covering and can wear this during the session if requested to.

To ensure a minimum of 1m distance is adhered to and items are not passed between the Warden and participants, participants are encouraged to place finds on the ground and step back while the Warden identifies it. For any fossils found by the Warden, or any instance when Wardens may need to touch a find, the Warden will use hand sanitiser before touching or giving the find away.

For practicality when fossil hunting, the group will be split into 'mini bubbles' once on the beach, each with a Teacher/Adult Helper and their own Warden. Mini bubbles will then be encouraged to only show finds to their own assigned Warden, reducing potential transmission by cross contamination.

Covid-19

- The novel Corona virus is a potentially fatal viral illness which can be transmitted from person to person as well as to and from inanimate objects.
- The Department of Health estimates that between 25 -50% of cases are asymptomatic so individuals may be unaware that they are contagious.
- On average, it takes 5 days before people display symptoms, during which time they are contagious (presymptomatic transmission).
- The virus can survive on surfaces for several days.
- The virus spreads more easily in indoor environments.
- There are many unknowns about this virus, but there is growing evidence that it can cause severe symptoms and may leave a significant number of sufferers with long term physical and/or neurological damage.

Risks

Infection can occur at every point of contact between Wardens and participants. This can be through airborne particles and or contact with infected surfaces or objects.

Vulnerable groups

Older people are more likely to have severe symptoms (necessitating hospital admission) and to have a significantly higher mortality rate from the virus than the rest of the population. The over 70s are termed clinically vulnerable and the risks rise significantly in over 80s and 90s. Men are more at risk than women and BAME people are particularly vulnerable. Those with certain medical conditions including diabetes, heart, liver or kidney disease, those who are more than 20% overweight, any illness (or treatment) which affects immune system function are especially at risk. Vulnerable people include those shielding others.

Groups of people at risk

Staff

- The Centre employs four full-time Wardens and one Seasonal Warden who are fully trained, first aid at work qualified and are DBS checked.
- All full-time Warden are under 45 and there is a lower mortality rate for this age group compared with older individuals.

School Bubbles

- They will be travelling from different parts of the country with varying levels of infection.
- They will have varying levels of respect for the virus and social distancing measures – as shown recently at seaside resorts, especially in Dorset.
- The shared facilities at the public toilets in Charmouth could be a major concern for virus transmission.
- Participants will be a range of ages, to include both students and teachers.

Hazard – Risk of infection – Surfaces and object handling

Who is at risk – Wardens and participants

Control measures	Further action to control risks	Who needs to carry out action	When is action needed by	Action taken date
Personal Protective Equipment for Wardens	Portable hand sanitiser, nitrile gloves, face masks and a visor will be offered.	Warden	Before starting an event the Warden should ensure they have adequate PPE	All equipment purchased in July 2020 and available from inside the Centre.
Personal Protective Equipment for participants	Regular hand sanitisation of participants is encouraged. Face coverings and nitrile gloves to be brought at the individuals' discretion.	Participants	School to bring hand sanitiser (and other PPE if choosing to do so) and use regularly.	
Social distancing	Keeping 1m+ apart from participants	Warden and participants	Duration of event	
Minimise passing of items between individuals.	This should be kept to a minimum and participants are encouraged to place finds on the ground and step back while the Warden identifies it. Hands should be sanitised at first opportunity if items are handled.	Warden and participants	Hands sanitised before the holder of the object changes.	
School bags to be carried or left on coach, replacing the bag drop in the Heritage Centre	Heritage Centre no longer hosting indoor lunch room	Participants	Day of session	

Hazard – Risk of infection – participant interaction – Outdoors

Who is at risk – Wardens and participants

Control measures	Further action to control risks	Who needs to carry out action	When is action needed by	Action taken date
Allow just 1 school bubble per session.	Once fossil hunting, original bubble will be split into mini bubbles of 10-15 children, each with their own Warden, reducing cross-interaction.	Warden to instruct school how many mini bubbles will be required. Lead teacher to split group into mini bubbles.	Warden: At time of booking. Lead Teacher: At start of session.	
Briefing video to replace the standard introductory talk that would take place within the Heritage Centre.	The entire event can now take place in the outdoor environment where there is a lower risk of infection.	Warden	Emailed to school at or close to the time of booking.	Briefing video made and edited in September 2020.
Personal Protective Equipment for Wardens	Portable hand sanitiser, nitrile gloves, face masks and a visor will be offered.	Warden	Before starting an event the Warden should ensure they have adequate PPE	All equipment purchased in July 2020 and available from inside the Centre.
Social distancing	Keeping 1m+ apart	Warden and participants	Duration of event	
Minimise passing of items between individuals.	This should be kept to a minimum and participants are encouraged to place finds on the ground and step back while the Warden identifies it. Hands should be sanitised at first opportunity if items are handled.	Warden and participants	Hands sanitised before the user of the object changes.	