



GET OUTSIDE
THE CLASSROOM

Canoe Expedition: Advice and Helpful Hints for Participants and their Parents

This guide has been put together by staff using the knowledge and experience within the GOtC team.

It is designed to help you prepare for your expedition.

The Expedition

You will be journeying along the Chester Canal for a total 10 kilometres from Bate's Bridge to Egg Bridge, Waverton with an overnight stop at a campsite. You will be responsible for paddling your canoe or kayak, putting up your tent, cooking your dinner and generally looking after yourself (with supervision) for the duration of the trip.

Group sizes

In most circumstances, you will travel on the canal in groups of around 10 with 1 accompanying member of school staff and 1 instructor.

You may find yourselves in either Canadian canoes, or double sit-on-top kayaks.



Sometimes we decide for your safety that it is best to raft two canoes together to create a catamaran as this makes it virtually impossible for a boat to capsize.



The trip is suitable for beginners, you don't need to have tried it before and we will always start with a thorough briefing and coaching on the basics to help you on your way.

Being able to swim isn't essential but feeling confident can help an awful lot.

Everyone gets issued with a buoyancy aid which will keep you afloat if you fall in. Falling in is rare and only really happens when instructions are not followed or by accident. As the expedition takes place on a canal you are never more than a few meters from the bank. You will probably find that you can stand up especially when you are close to the side.

Equipment we provide;

- All Canoes/Kayaks/Paddles and Buoyancy Aids
- A waterproof bag for you to pop your lunch/spare clothes in.
- Tent (most are for 3 people)
- Sleeping Mat
- Cooking Stove and Fuel
- Knife, Fork, Spoon, Bowl, Mug

Suggested Kit List

Personally, you'll need to arrive wearing;

- Old Trainers/Wellies
- Leggings, Trac suit trousers/shorts
- T shirt
- Fleece
- Waterproof Jacket

In a **small** bag to take with you in the Canoe (which you can put in the dry bag we will give you);

- Packed Lunch

- Waterproof trousers
- Spare Jumper
- Water (at least 1 litre)
- Torch
- Suncream, sunglasses, hats, inhalers, gloves etc.

In a **separate** bag for your overnight stay which will remain on the transport and be taken to the camp for you;

- Full change of clothes
- Sleeping bag (just stuff all the spare clothes in the bag it came in and you have a pillow too)
- Small wash kit
- a black bin bag (for any wet clothes)
- Spare footwear (trainers or crocs are suitable) for the campsite

Kit Advise

There is no need to make this complicated and expensive, but it is worth putting some consideration in to what you will wear.

Look at the weather before you go on the expedition, if it's cold, take a warm hat, if it's sunny, a cap and sun cream.

Old trainers are ok but on colder days Wellies are loads better. Crocs and sandals really aren't appropriate.

Proper waterproof coat/trousers are key pieces of kit and **have** to be carried (we don't do this trip in winter) and if you can stay dry, you can stay warm. If you don't have your own, it's not a problem. They can easy be borrowed when you arrive, but it would be helpful if you let your teacher know and we can have the right number waiting for your classes' arrival.

Take a mid-layer, something like a fleece as it can get cold when the sun drops away, and you are tired from the days paddling.

Remember you can always add the waterproof for warmth. You will be surprised how much warmth it adds as a layer. They are not just for rain.

A lightweight t-shirt like a sports top is ideal, polo shirts are also great as they protect your neck from the sun and help prevent rubbing from your buoyancy aid. Wear one and bring one spare. This layer will help to take the sweat away from your body and keep you dry.

Leggings or lightweight tracksuit bottoms are perfect for walking in, shorts too if it's warm enough but beware nettles are likely to be found along paths we use to get to and from the canal. Bring one set to wear and one spare.

One pair of socks to be worn plus two spares. Lightweight walking socks are best if you can get them.

An old set of trainers/Crocs are a must for the campsite. Bare feet or just socks are not an option (flip flops leave feet exposed and at risk from an accidental spill from a stove and impalement on old tent pegs - not nice!).

Mum's and Dad's – hands off!

We know you love them, and we know you care but it's all got to be carried by the young person. The little extra 'just in cases' tend to be added by well-meaning others.

A wise man may once have said 'the explorer with the fewest possessions is the freest' so make sure you pack the bag yourself! If somebody else does it, you will not find the important bits you need, will carry too much and struggle when you have to do it yourself anyway before you go home.

Top tip - Pack in two phases. Gather everything you plan to take into a washing basket. Next day, check the forecast for the area you are going to, go through it all again, be ruthless, remember what the wise man may have said and now pack your bag.