

# RIVER VALLEY HANDBOOK

Company Operations

ADO SERVICES C.I.C.

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## ADO RIVER VALLEY HANDBOOK – FOR ALL TO READ

River Valley is run by ADO Services C.I.C. (ADO), a Not For Profit Community Interest Company.

*This handbook is designed to provide important guidelines to key areas for customers and service users to follow and form part of your acceptance to all the main ADO Terms and Conditions and Operational Procedures.*

### 1. Operating Hours and Site Access

The River Valley hours of operation are from **9.00am** to **3.30pm**.

Site access for vehicles is via the main gate entrance on Keats Road, where there is drop off and pick up parking spaces. The car park is accessible from **8.30am** for service users. We request that vehicles are not parked on Keats Road and our car park is utilised. Do not block any of our residential neighbour's driveways.

The main visitor reception area opens at **8.45am** to ensure prompt access for students. However, please note that due to our thorough risk assessment procedures in the morning, we are unable to welcome students into the ADO learning spaces until **9am**. To access the main reception, leave the car park on foot by walking out of the small green pedestrian gate, before walking past the goat enclosure and then through the green visitor reception door.

Staff members will then sign in and escort students into their respective main learning zones.

If the student transport (taxi), parent or carer arrives onsite early, it is recommended staying in the vehicle for safety in the car park until the main reception opens. Children and young people are not allowed to play around or wait alone in the car park in line with Health and Safety procedures.

**Please note: Vehicle owners park in the car park at their own risk. We cannot be held responsible for injuries or vehicle damage in the car park zone. For Post16 students, please park on neighbouring roads.**

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Our River Valley site is on a residential street, therefore it is not advised that students wait in the street or that transport takes up street parking for residents. Please respect our local residents and support the community by using our facilities and not blocking driveways.

If a student has not arrived on site by **9:10am** and ADO has not been advised accordingly by telephone or email, the ADO office will contact the parent-carer and supporting professionals to advise they have not yet arrived. If ADO has been advised of absence by the parent-carer, we will forward the relevant information to the supporting professionals for their attendance records (upon request from individual Local Authorities).

For more information and further guidance on attendance, please refer to our **Attendance Policy**.

## 2. The School Day

The school day begins at **9.00am**. Students will have 10 minutes from **9.00-9.10am** AM registration where they will put their belongings away and prepare themselves for the day.

Students then have one lesson from **9.10-10am** with a morning snack from **10-10.10am**. This is then followed by a further two lessons.

The students break for lunch at **11.50am** for one hour, with the afternoon register being taken from **12-12.15pm**.

From **12.50-1.40pm** is the first afternoon lesson, followed by one remaining lesson from **1.40-2.30pm**.

From **2:30-2:40pm** there is an informal snack break before mindfulness time at **2:40-3:00pm**.

During mindfulness time is where learner groups are supported by our staff and have the opportunity to engage in therapeutic activities that focus on the present moment which helps to help calm and regroup them prior to going home. Some students also access a 1:1 therapy session within the school day (based on assessment and referral request).

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**3:00-3:30pm** is extracurricular club time. **3:30pm** is home time. Students can be collected by their transport or parent-carers once they have collected all their belongings and have exited the site safely.

**However, please note, that standard procedure for any secondary student is to leave site independently and if this is not possible due to individual risk factors and student presentation then it is the responsibility of relevant professionals-care givers to notify ADO of this and provide a written reason for this request to refuse independent student exits from ADO.**

## **2.1 Lessons and Curriculum**

Students are provided with specialist lessons in line with our ethos, which may include (but not subject to) the following:

- Animal Science
- General Science
- Horticulture Science
- Equine Studies
- Adventure Sport
- PSHE
- Creative Education
- Functional Skills (Mathematics/English/Science)
- Business Studies
- Health and Social Care
- Technology
- Countryside and environment
- Bushcraft / Forest Studies
- Mindfulness & Relaxation

Dependent on the individual student and their cognitive abilities, they will have access to recognised courses which could lead to relevant qualifications such as AQA Unit Awards, BTECS, and Functional Skills. Relevant pathways will be discussed with students and relevant caregivers-professionals at the point of the assessment and throughout 'Individual Learner Plan' meetings.

We follow the Independent Framework with a learner centred approach and liaise closely with other settings if a student is on dual role.

All of our lessons are predominantly led outside and are adapted to be appropriate to the year groups and key stages that the student is working at.

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There is exposure to acceptable levels of risk through outdoor education in the security of supervised groups, which will support students to learn about risk and how to keep themselves safe.

## 2.2 Collection

If transport is late for pickup, ADO reserves the right to apply an additional charge for the resource time of a member of staff to wait with the student/s. This will be noted and passed onto to the financial department in line with normal invoicing periods.

Students can either wait in the customer reception area, walk to their waiting transport in the car park or travel home independently (unless this is not permitted, dependent on individual students). This is to support appropriate age group responsibilities, independence and transitioning into society.

## 3. Student External Trips

Students will occasionally leave the site, with the supervision of staff members, for pre-planned external trips. This could include, but is not limited to, local open recreational spaces, parks, woodlands, dog walking in nearby residential areas, fitness centres and areas, outdoor water sport centres, climbing centres and equine yards and stables.

As the external trips and outings benefit the students' education and experiences, all students will be allowed to access these trips as relevant. If a parent-carer does **NOT** want their child-young person to partake in external visits, they must send a written letter to the ADO office and confirm via telephone. Due to staffing ratios required to support groups, if it is deemed that a student is not permitted to attend the external trips, the student may require a reduced timetable that day as there may not be the additional staff available to remain on site with them. This can be discussed directly with the parent-carer.

If a student displays negative behaviour or is of a high risk from absconding from the staff, a risk assessment will be completed for them and it may be deemed unsuitable for the student to attend the external visits until they are able to understand these risks and follow guidelines.

## 4. Homework

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ADO will not typically set weekly homework for a student, unless the student is either, absent for multiple days, has experienced extraordinary circumstances, the family have requested homework or the staff team feel it would hugely benefit towards their curriculum work, or to work towards qualifications, such as AQA, BTEC or Functional Skills.

Any set homework will be discussed with the student (and parent-carer if relevant) and a clear due date and method of submission will be explained.

## 5. Transport

ADO does not organise transport to or from the setting. This must be arranged privately or through the supporting professionals. The ADO business office must be advised of the transportation plans so we know who to expect and can contact them in case of an emergency collection.

Transport must be on site for a prompt **3:30pm** collection. Once a student has left the site premises via the main reception gate, ADO holds no responsibility for them.

## 6. Subsistence

All students attending our provision must bring a healthy packed lunch and refillable water bottle. We also recommend they are provided healthy snacks for break times. We operate a healthy eating policy and like to ensure that student lunches are within our healthy eating policy guidelines. We will contact parent and carers to support alternative ideas for lunches should this arise. We ask families to be mindful of environmental factors, and therefore limit single use items such as plastic. There are many drinking water stations around the site to refill water bottles.

## 7. Student Clothing and Footwear Requirements

All students have lessons at the outdoor Poets Corner Centre location and they must be prepared to attend dressed in suitable named clothing and footwear for the occasion.

For all seasons, please ensure the student attends in base layers including trousers or leggings. Skirts, shorts and dresses are **not** suitable for the Outdoor

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Education site as they provide little protection against weather and when in the woodland areas.

Sensible outdoor shoes are required, for example outdoor walking boots or wellies for wet or winter weather. CROCS, flip-flops or open toe sandals are **not** permitted as these are not suitable for our outdoor activities and do not provide foot support on uneven ground. In winter months, we recommend wellies should be worn with good quality thermal socks as this footwear can prove cold if worn for the full day.

We request that students attend with an appropriate bag, such as a backpack to store their belongings. There will be water available for bottle refills. Hand washing stations are supplied throughout our learning areas and hot water stations are also situated in multiple zones, in addition to a functioning hot shower that can be used in specific circumstances.

If a student turns up wearing inappropriate clothing either not conducive to the weather or the activities they will taking part in, ADO Staff have the right to request them to wear spare additional or replacement clothing that we have. If the child or young person refuses to wear these items and we feel this puts them at risk from injury or illness, ADO reserves the right to request collection. The child or young person can of course return later in the day if they are then dressed appropriately. ADO students must attend with a full change of spare clothes to avoid any emotional dysregulation from any potential accidents that may arise.

Students will have use of a locker for their bags during the school day.

### **7.1 Cold and Wet Weather**

On cold days, please ensure the students have suitable thermal base layers of clothing to retain their heat and keep them comfortable. We recommend bringing spare clothing in the event these may be required. All students must have a named hat or cap suitable to the seasons. Gloves are required and waterproof gloves are highly recommended. A raincoat with a hood is a necessity for every day in attendance.

With the great British weather, who knows whether it will rain or shine so please send students prepared.

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## 7.2 Hot Weather

Please ensure students attend with a suitable high factor sun cream (minimum factor 30), which they can apply themselves when needed. If the weather is very warm, please be aware that we do forest school sessions and it may be advisable to bring insect repellent. Over-knee length shorts as minimum or leggings-cargo trousers with t-shirts must still be worn as this will provide some protection against sunburn or scratches in our forest and woodland areas. Skirts and dresses are not suitable attire for our activities and forest sessions.

## 7.3 Mobile Phone Access

All students are discouraged from bringing any mobile device to ADO, however if this cannot be avoided, they will need to be handed over at our gate to staff at the start of the session and given back at the end.

Students will be unable to access any mobile device in the duration of their time with us. If a student refuses to hand their phones in to ADO then they will be refused entry.

Of course, if a caregiver needs to be in contact with their young person during the day this can be arranged via ADO on site mobiles. If this applies to you, please email your specific requests to [education@adoservices.co.uk](mailto:education@adoservices.co.uk)

## 8. Student Medication

Staff members are only allowed to administer drugs if they have been prescribed by a doctor and staff members have written permission from the parent-carer stating frequency and dosage.

If the student has any allergies including hay-fever or fur allergies, we strongly recommend you provide a named GP prescription bottle of antihistamine or equivalent in order that we can support the student as required. If an allergy flare up is impacting the student's enjoyment and participation and we do not have any medication to administer, we will call the relevant contact to advise them and arrange collection.

Members of the core ADO team are first aid qualified and trained and carry a medical kit at all times.

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Staff will administer first aid to a student as needed. If parents-carers opt for their child-young person not to receive medical attention, they must send a signed letter to the ADO Office and confirm with them over the phone.

## 9. Photography

If a parent-carer does **NOT** want their child-young person to have their images taken at ADO, they must send a written letter to the ADO office and confirm via telephone at point of when they are on-rolled or at the time of decision change (if they are already on roll).

As part of ADO's growth and development, photos may be used within the ADO website, social media platforms, paper promotions, display boards etc. The photos are to help illustrate our services. ADO will never link a student's name to their photo, without further confirmation from parents-carers. ADO will never sell images or share them to third parties.

For students completing qualifications such as AQA, Functional Skills or BTECs, ADO staff may need to photograph them completing practical work as part of the course evidence requirements. Photo permission is not required for this as evidence is a compulsory part of completing a course.

## 10. Challenging Behaviour

Due to the nature of students and young people referred to the River Valley, challenging behaviour can arise. ADO staff are fully trained in methods and procedures in how to deal with challenging behaviour including therapeutic interventions. We follow a strict behaviour policy and in the incidence of challenging behaviour we will talk to the student about their actions, offer alternatives and work towards the student taking responsibility for their actions.

Full details can be viewed in our **Behaviour Modification Policy** in the ADO Library on our website, [www.adorivervalley.co.uk](http://www.adorivervalley.co.uk). All challenging behavior is recorded within Incident Forms and the relevant contacts will be advised of incidents accordingly.

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## 11. Safeguarding

The Poets Corner site is designed to maximize safeguarding for its students, visitors, staff or partners. There are specific zones that denote the safety of the age groups and other site visitors.

ADO takes the safeguarding of children and young people very seriously, as such all staff are fully trained in safeguarding procedures and any instances are reported directly and promptly to the safeguarding officer on premises. Our staff are all Enhanced DBS checked and we have always qualified Paediatric First Aid staff on site.

Our setting is committed to working alongside our service users, the community and the children-young people themselves to ensure the children's safety at all times.

Any safeguarding concerns must be reported via the ADO Office and a call back will be rearranged with one of ADO's Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL). There is an escalation process in place internally. Reporting to other members of the ADO team is strictly prohibited for confidential boundaries.

**Our Designated Safeguarding Lead is Katie Palmer** (Headteacher)

Our Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officer is Robert Jarvis (Head of Outdoor Learning, and Victoria McHolland-Pilcher (Chair of the Proprietor Body)

*Students are very welcome to ask to speak to Kate at any time if they have a concern regarding safeguarding. If Kate is not available physically we can organise a phone call, and if not the Deputy Designated Safeguarding Officers can be used.*

Please refer to our **Safeguarding Policy** for further information.

## 12. ADO Policies and Procedures

Full un-edited copies of all the relevant policies and procedures for the ADO Education team and all associated services, including the ADO River Valley can be found on the main ADO website within the ADO Library [www.adorivervalley.co.uk](http://www.adorivervalley.co.uk) .

## 13. Details on Qualifications:

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We aim for all of our students to reach their full potential, we provide baseline assessments within the first two weeks of students starting with us and ascertain a wealth of information from the assessment process. Once the assessments are complete, our educators will review. Within the first two weeks our students also have an Individual Learner Plan meeting, whereby they discuss their interests with regards to the curriculum and qualifications that are available to them.

We have a wide variety of vocational qualifications available to students, irrespective of academic levels. The idea is that we provide stepping stones to achieve higher levelled qualifications throughout the years that students are with us.

If students or family members feel unhappy with the equality and access to assessments then they have every right to appeal by reviewing our **Malpractice, Appeals and Complaints Policy**.

We pride ourselves on supporting young people in every way possible, in many cases this is to ensure that students can achieve the same as one another. If they do need support in one or more given areas, we will ensure that reasonable adjustments and access arrangements are in place.

#### 14. School Checklist

- Labelled Required Medication (including allergy medication if needed)
- Packed Lunch
- Snacks
- Refillable Drink Bottle
- Suitable Outdoor Clothing
- Waterproof jacket/coat with hood
- Warm Layers of Clothing
- Cold Protection – Hat, Scarf, Gloves, Extra Socks
- Heat Protection – Hat-Cap and Sun Cream (minimum factor 30)
- Comfortable Waterproofed Trainers or Outdoor Boots (*Note: Footwear Can Get Very Muddy!*)
- Wellies or Waterproof Outdoor Boots

#### 14. Important Contact Information

River Valley is located at:

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Poets Corner Centre  
19A Keats Road  
Welling  
DA16 3NB

The ADO business office is located at:

ADO Services CIC,  
Head Office  
126 Upper Wickham Lane  
Welling  
Kent  
DA16 3DP

**ADO Contact Number – 020 8850 6778**

**Email – [education@adoservices.co.uk](mailto:education@adoservices.co.uk)**

**Office Hours – 8.30am until 5pm – Monday to Friday (Closed Weekends)**

### **Key Staff**

- **Katie Palmer – Head of Education, Site Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), SENCO Advisor, Quality Assurance**
  - **Victoria McHolland-Pilcher – Proprietor, Director of Education, Senior DSO**
  - **Gary McHolland-Pilcher – Head of Operations, Health and Safety, Policies & Procedures,**
  - **Robert Jarvis- Lead Outdoor Instructor and Manager, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)**
  - **Joe Greenwood- Land Support Supervisor, Health and Safety-Risk Assessment of Setting**
  - **Michelle Brodie- Wellbeing Officer**
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