



RISK ASSESSMENTS

Many leaders of young children feel unsure about taking them on trips outdoors. However, a few simple health and safety rules and procedures can make a visit to Holt Island Nature Reserve a safe and rewarding outing. Here are our hints and tips to ensure peace of mind:

In advance:

- Visit the site
- Confirm local health and safety considerations with the local authority (LA) or contact the Outdoor Education Advisor on 01480 375133
- Carry out a risk assessment, including health and safety measures (see hazards table overleaf)
- Ensure that an appropriate ratio of supervising adults will be present
- Do not plan any activities that involve children working on the edge of the boardwalk or on the river banks

On the day:

- Check the area again on the day to make sure there have been no changes
- Do a safety talk for both children and assisting adults before the activities start – this should set boundaries and ensure safe use of equipment
- Make sure health and safety measures are in place
- Monitor the activity as it takes place to ensure that it continues to run safely
- Make sure that children wash their hands immediately after the activity and before eating or drinking
- Ensure that the children who take part have appropriate clothing for the prevailing weather conditions

On the next three pages you will find a Hazards Table compiled in 2010 detailing particular situations that may occur on the Reserve. We indicate what HDC has done to minimize the hazards and what we want you to do to help avoid accidents. There is also space for your own notes. Please let us have any feedback you may feel is helpful.

Hazards Table 1/3

Significant hazards we have identified	What we have done to minimize the hazards	What we want you to do to minimize the hazards	Your notes and specific hazards you have identified
<p>Slips and trips</p>	<p>The board walk is raised off the ground, without hand rails. It is tarred and chipped but it may still be slippery and have debris underfoot. This is a natural site and so the ground is uneven. It is checked weekly during the summer as part of our site checks and we deal with any hazards. At other times, teaching staff must undertake a pre-visit check.</p>	<p>Please make sure the children walk, not run, and are alert and under control when moving around the site. Ensure children do not try to 'overtake' or push others out of the way. They will then not fall off the boardwalk</p>	
<p>Dogs on the Island</p>	<p>Dogs may visit the island with their owners, but must be on a lead and owners must pick up and take away any mess. Very few dogs actually go on the Island. There is a refuse bin close to the white bridge entrance.</p>	<p>Supervise the children and remind them not to approach or stroke dogs which come too close. Politely ask dog owners who do not control their dogs to take them away from the children. Ensure the children wash their hands before lunch and at the end of the day.</p>	
<p>Getting lost</p>	<p>Maps of the Island reserve are provided in this pack. The board walk is a circular route, but there are alternatives. Staff should familiarise themselves prior to the visit.</p>	<p>Warn the children in advance they must stay with their group. Supervise the children closely and do regular head counts. Set boundaries for each activity, including lunchtime, so they do not stray too far. Group leaders should familiarise themselves with the map in advance.</p>	
<p>Sunstroke/sunburn and changes in the weather</p>	<p>There is no class room facility on Holt Island Nature Reserve. There is therefore no shade from the sun or rain, other than that provided by trees. No visits should take place to the island during a thunderstorm.</p>	<p>Teaching staff are responsible for the children's well being. Ensure the children are dressed for the weather (wellies, raincoats or sun-cream, sunhats and trousers, NOT shorts or sandals). Feel free to bring bottles of water on very hot days. Please take away the empty bottles.</p>	

Hazards Table 2/3

Significant hazards we have identified	What we have done to minimize the hazards	What we want you to do to minimize the hazards	Your notes and specific hazards you have identified
Dirty hands	Hand-washing facilities are not available. Staff should bring anti-bac, waterless soap to use on the island.	Ensure the children keep their hands out of eyes and mouths during the visit. Ensure the children wash their hands with soap before eating and at the end of the day.	
Child protection issues.	The site is open to the public at all times. All Rangers employed by Huntingdonshire District Council have been police checked. Rangers will not supervise the children in a one-to-one situation. Members of the public may be on the island at the same time, but would not normally become involved with the children's activities.	Ensure correct levels of supervision so that Rangers (if present) are not included within adult-to-child ratios. Make sure children stay within sight at all times and regular head counts are done. Follow your school policy if a child has to be removed from the group, for example, to go to the toilet. Supervise children at all times.	
Allergies such as hay fever and food, or bee and wasp stings	Due to the nature of the site wasps and bees are present, plus pollen-producing plants and nut trees.	Before starting any activities, tell the children what to do with 'buzzy' minibeasts caught in sweep nets. Ensure group leaders are aware of any allergies the children in their group have, and that children have the correct medication with them. It is your responsibility to dispense the medication and /or know what to do in the event of a reaction. Advise children to ignore flying insects rather than flapping their hands at them.	

Hazards Table ³/₃

Significant hazards we have identified	What we have done to minimize the hazards	What we want you to do to minimize the hazards	Your notes and specific hazards you have identified
Nettles, prickles and berries	We keep nettles and thistles back from the path and boardwalk as much as is practical on a Nature Reserve.	Prior to your visit, ensure children know what nettles and thistles look like. Ensure the children are aware of patches of nettles and thistles and work away from these areas. Ensure the children wear trousers and trainers or wellies. Shorts and open-toed sandals are not suitable. Instruct children not to put berries near to their mouth. Closely supervise the children if they are collecting natural materials, especially in the autumn.	
Water, ponds and river	Holt Island is accessed over bridges with hand rails. The river water is untreated and the banks are steep. Natural barriers of vegetation are left, to stop visitors inadvertently going too near the water.	Ensure the children do not go near the water without adult supervision and stay kneeling or sitting all the time if they are pond dipping. Ensure children listen and follow instructions.	
Unexpected occurrences	Not every situation can be predicted. First aid kits are not provided.	It is advisable that each group carries a mobile phone and has access to a first aid kit. We suggest the use of a whistle or other signal to call back the children.	

The aim of the day is for the children to learn about the natural environment whilst having fun. Encouragement from the group leaders and parent helpers and good spirits is the key to a successful day! If there is anything you think Rangers should know about, please contact 01480 451568