

INFORMATION TO HELP TEACHERS & GROUP LEADERS PREPARE THEIR GROUP FOR ORIENTEERING AT COMBE HILL WOOD

Combe Hill can be very muddy and slippery under foot. Walking boots, trail running trainers or football/rugby boots may be advisable under these conditions, and at least a change of footwear is recommended.

Clothes: Trainers, tracksuits/jogging trousers.

(Shorts are not allowed at competition events -a rule of the sport - for safety. Jeans may not be considered suitable for running.)

Long sleeved T-shirts may be worn if it is a hot day.

Cagoules or anoraks may be advisable if rain is likely.

Pen or Pencil: Each competitor will need a pen or pencil to write down the control codes on their map.

Compass: Not essential for the easier courses and should only be brought if the group has been taught how to use it to 'set' the map using the red end of the needle.

Watches: Older group members who own watches should be encouraged to wear them so that they return to their group leaders at their appointed time!

Whistles: It is also a good idea for each person/pair to carry a whistle.

Pre visit work: It is advisable that all group members who are visiting a new area for orienteering should have done some preliminary work in the classroom, school hall or grounds so that they understand the following:

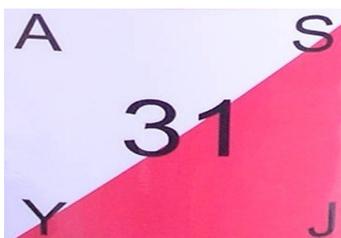
(a) a map is a pattern of shapes:

(b) symbols are used to depict features and vegetation on the ground;

(c) when following a route on a map it is essential to keep the map 'set' so that one always faces the direction of travel.

Safety: You should be aware that Combe Hill Wood has a number of potential hazards. These include fallen trees and branches (which can be very slippery when wet), uneven ground and steep slopes once you are off the main tracks, fences, water features, etc. Forestry operations may be taking place. Please observe any safety or warning signs. The ground can also be very muddy after periods of heavy rain. You should complete a risk assessment form for your own organisation.

Control posts: The control posts consist of a rough wooden post with a plaque, like the one below, attached to it. There is an identifying number and code letters in the four corners of the plaque.



The number will correspond to the number on the control description list for the course you are doing, and the letter is to enable you to check that the correct control has been visited. Group leaders need to tell the group which letter they are collecting, "top right letter codes" for example. The choice enables different courses to be run with less cheating. Competitors write down the letter

in the appropriate box on their map. There is a separate list of control numbers/letter codes for you to use to check control cards.

Start & Finish: The Start post is at the display board on the South Eastern edge of the car park, shown on the map by a purple triangle. The Finish is at a post on the main track junction 20 meters to the north of the car park, shown on the map by a double purple circle.

Upon arrival:

- Sort out the group into pairs. (It is not advisable to send out larger groups together as we find from experience that more than two will argue or chat and lose concentration.)
- Give each group member a map.
- Check that everyone who sets off from the start knows which post(s) they are going to and that they have talked through with one of the helpers which way they are going.
- Extra helpers can be placed around the area to ensure safety.
- Continue with short courses. You may want to make up slightly longer courses for those who are more experienced or who 'catch on' quickly. However a navigational problem such as going from the start to a far away post is regarded as far too difficult and requiring too many 'decision' points for group members. (Group members can navigate a far more complicated course in their own school grounds than they can in an unfamiliar area, so only give longer or harder courses, to those you are confident can tackle them and only after they have completed the easier tasks.)
- If you progress at a steady pace, all should succeed. It is better that everyone leaves with the idea that orienteering is fun and easy; not that it's about getting lost - in fact, don't even mention the possibility!

Suggested Exercises:

Map walk: It is always advisable to do a short map walk when visiting a new area. During the walk the map should be orientated or 'set' at all times and you should stop and point out the different paths, features, trees etc. to familiarise the group with the map.

Example. You could walk out as far as control 01 and 02 on the White course pointing out the various features on the way. Show them a control so that they can see how it is marked. It is best if the walk is done in manageable groups.

Beginners courses: Start with the White or Yellow course and progress from there.

Harder courses: Do not attempt the more difficult courses until your group have a degree of competence.

Score: For the runners who want to try and bag as many as possible in the 1 hour limit.