

# THE NATIONAL SHOWCAVES CENTRE FOR WALES DAN-YR-OGOF

## Safety Statement

The venue fully accepts its responsibilities under Health and Safety Legislation. A Health and Safety Policy is in place together with written risk assessments undertaken in respect of our legal duties relating to persons other than employees (i.e. visitors) coming onto our site and using our facilities.

Please be assured that your safety and health whilst on our site is of our utmost concern. We have worked closely with the Local Council, contacted Health and Safety Executive regarding health and safety matters, and wish to ensure that your visit is educational, enjoyable, and fun for your pupils.

We operate a policy for staff recruitment, training and assessment, which ensures that all staff with a responsibility for the safety and welfare of visitors / participants are able to undertake the duties they are assigned.

Teachers, other school staff and helpers are kindly requested to work in partnership with us for the purpose of educational visits, by actively supervising children within their care whilst on site and by considering the following information within school risk assessments.

## Background

- Experience** The venue has been open to the public since 1964. The site is Wales' top award-winning tourism attraction, and also holds major conservation awards. We are also a 'Quality Assured Visitor Attraction' under the Wales Tourist Board VAQAS scheme.
- Venue Details** The venue offers visitors the opportunity of experiencing/ undertaking a self-guided underground visit (there are 3 fantastic showcaves to see), the opportunity to walk around one of the world's largest dinosaur parks, wonder at the replica Iron Age farm, explore our conservation-based museum, visit the Shire Horse centre, farm area, and relax in the covered children's play areas (ROSPA inspected). You can also walk around the large re-created stone circles, and avenues of standing stones.
- Visitor No.s** We have approximately 90,000 visitors a year, and over 12,000 school children visit us annually.
- Suitability** The venue, and its attractions, are considered suitable for pupils of aged 4 yrs and over. Children below the age of 4 are welcome, but some areas might offer limited access. *N.B. School staff must supervise their children at all times when visiting the complex.*
- Contact Information** We look forward to welcoming you. If you wish to discuss aspects of your visit, or would like to arrange a pre-visit, please do not hesitate to contact Carl Shaw or James Price, the complex managers for the site.
- We would request that the group leader reports to the Ticket Office to exchange information prior to entry onto the site. All groups are usually given a brief H&S talk prior to entry, by our staff.
- The venue operates an emergency contact number for visitors if they should require assistance while on site. Please note that this number is Tel. 01639 730 284 and is staffed during opening hours. (10am to 4pm.)
- If after your visit you have any concerns, or experienced any problems regarding the management of the venue, or health and safety matters during your visit, we would welcome the opportunity to discuss these with you. Please contact Carl or James on :-
- Tel: 01639 730 284 or e-mail: [james@showcaves.co.uk](mailto:james@showcaves.co.uk)

## General Information

<b>Animal Fouling in Public Access areas</b>	Dogs and pets are not allowed within the site. Assistance dogs are most welcome !
<b>Communication Systems</b>	All venue staff carry communication aids.
<b>Criminal History / Civil Actions</b>	Owing to the natural layout of the site and our requirements for school visits to be supervised by school staff/helpers at all times, our staff are not left alone with pupils.
<b>Equipment / Play Equipment</b>	<p>All equipment (within the site) is regularly checked to ensure it remains 'safe and fit for the purpose' and results of inspections are recorded daily in an equipment log.</p> <p>Height and age restrictions are in place for these playgrounds. Ages 6–10 years are able to use Barney Owl's Playground. The Jurassic Karting track is for ages 4–10 years. A maximum height for a child of 135cm (4' 5") is in place for the play barn.</p> <p>All play equipment within the dedicated area conforms to current British and European Standards, and is subject to regular inspection.</p> <p>School staff must supervise children when using this equipment. The climbing of trees and Standing Stones within the venue is forbidden.</p>
<b>Emergency Evacuation</b>	<p>Emergency evacuation procedures are in place. All venue staff are familiar with and regularly practise these.</p> <p>Evacuation Notices are posted within the site at the following locations – the Coffee Shop, and the Rock and Dinosaur Shop</p> <p>On hearing the alarm, which is a continuous ringing bell, all visitors must make their way to the dedicated Assembly Point located in the car park marked with the YELLOW disabled car parking signs.</p> <p>Written procedures for the caves are also given to staff members working in this department.</p>
<b>Facilities for visitors with Special Needs</b>	<p>The venue tries to accommodate where possible the requirements of visitors with special needs. Schools and party leaders must ensure that suitable arrangements are in place in order that appropriate supervision and assistance is available to pupils with special needs.</p> <p><i>Physical Impairment</i> – Wheelchair access is possible in very limited areas of the site.</p> <p><i>Visual Impairment</i> – The lighting levels underground are subdued owing to conservation issues.</p> <p>We are aware that clarification of specific provisions may be needed by schools in relation to more detailed risk assessment requirements for certain special needs pupils. In such circumstances we would invite schools to contact us. For detailed information an access statement is available on our web site <a href="http://www.showcaves.co.uk">www.showcaves.co.uk</a>. In addition it is recommended further clarification be sought from a Duty Manager.</p>
<b>First Aid</b>	There are two first aid points located within the venue. One is situated in the Coffee Shop, and a secondary one at the Ticket Office. One, or both are staffed throughout opening hours, and a qualified First Aider can be contacted at these points.
<b>Insurance (Public Liability)</b>	We have a public liability cover of £15 million.
<b>Loss of Bearings</b>	Please note that due to the nature of the venue children are at risk of getting lost if they stray from organised parties or routes. <i>Constant teacher supervision is essential.</i>
<b>Lost Person Stations</b>	First Aid stations are also "lost person" stations. Enquiries can be made at any of these stations.
<b>Maximum Party Sizes</b>	The venue caters for most group party sizes. Please enquire for further details.

<b>Medical Needs</b>	<p>The venue should be contacted by the school, or party leader, if any pupil is known to have any specific, or serious medical condition / needs. Discussion will be required to consider emergency arrangements.</p> <p>We will, <i>where it is safe to do so</i>, aim to fully include pupils with specific, or serious medical conditions within activities offered.</p>
<b>Harmful / Poisonous Plants / Fungi</b>	<p>In the countryside, at certain times of the year some poisonous berries may be prevalent on trees and shrubs. This fact also applies within our grounds. Schools should advise all children that berries should not be picked or eaten.</p> <p>Certain fungi are also known to grow periodically. Schools should advise all children that fungi should not be picked or eaten</p>
<b>Required Visitor Conduct</b>	<p><i>Visitors must not:-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Damage or touch Showcave formations.</li> <li>- Enter areas which are not open to the public.</li> <li>- Behave in an unruly manner.</li> <li>- Touch any working machinery, or electrical equipment.</li> <li>- Leave the pathways.</li> </ul> <p><b>NB</b> - We reserve the right to refuse admission to visiting groups. Owing to conservation concerns, and the underground element of the trip, well-disciplined behaviour is essential for the children's safety when on our site.</p> <p>Party leaders must not leave children unsupervised at any time.</p>
<b>Schematic Map</b>	<p>This is available and includes vehicle routes, coach parking areas, as well as many other items of interest. This can be printed directly from our web site (Please look in the 'Quick Page Finder', under the heading of <i>Site Map</i>). Additional copies can, of course, be collected on the day of your visit if needed.</p>
<b>Site Inspections of Venue Facilities / Areas</b>	<p>Venue Staff conduct regular inspections of the facilities, and an internal reporting mechanism is in place for any safety hazards. Site inspections are recorded in a log.</p>
<b>Site Staff Identification</b>	<p>A white shirt and tie is worn by Showcave staff. Other venue staff wear 'branded' polo shirts. These being <i>red</i> for Craft Shop staff, and <i>black</i>, with <i>red</i> tabard, for Coffee Shop staff. A <i>navy</i> polo shirt is worn by staff at the Shire Horse Centre. All our staff are only too happy to help with any problems or difficulties you may experience whilst at the venue.</p>
<b>Vehicle Traffic</b>	<p>A Visitor Coach Park, and designated disabled parking is available. No vehicles are permitted in the main square of the visitor attraction.</p>
<b>Weather Protection / Sun Safety</b>	<p>A number of areas are available throughout the venue which offer protection from the weather (i.e. adverse conditions or hot sunny days). These include shaded picnic areas, covered common areas, as well as the Museum, Coffee Shop, Rock and Dinosaur shop.</p>
<b>Welfare Facilities</b>	<p>Four public toilet blocks are present (one with disabled facilities) within the venue. Two are located within the Coffee Shop, one at the entrance to the Rock and Dinosaur Shop (this is where the disabled facilities are located), a further toilet block is situated just off the main square. All are clearly signposted. All public conveniences are regularly supervised / cleaned by venue staff. However, we know that teachers' supervision helps keep these toilet areas in a good condition for everyone's benefit.</p> <p>A coffee shop is available within the venue offering a selection of snacks and drinks. Water is freely available. These premises provide internal eating areas. (N.B. Only food bought on these premises can be consumed here.)</p> <p>In addition there is a small, covered, external eating area, ideal for pupils who bring school packed lunches. There are also open-air picnic areas, with shade.</p> <p>We operate a strict "No Smoking" policy throughout the visitor attraction.</p>

## Areas of Higher Risk

### **Contact with animals**

Visitors should not enter animal enclosures. Some of our animals are allowed to walk along and through the main pathway to the Shire Horse Centre. Meals are not to be consumed in proximity to animal areas – and NO FOOD should be taken in to these areas.

Hand washing facilities are provided for hygiene precautions following any animal handling. An alcohol sanitiser (Talquat Tincture), which does not require soap, water or a hand towel, is available, and children must use these facilities. Good hygiene practices are essential, as it is a form of controlling health risks such as:-

- E-Coli 0157 from contact with animals.
- Listeria from contact with infected and sick lambs.
- Toxoplasma from contact with cat faeces.
- Toxocariasis from contact with dog / cat faeces, which can cause blindness.

A 'welly wash' is also available.

*Please note* that expectant mothers may be exposed to increased risks from infection from animals. These include possible transmission of :- Bovine chlamydia from contact with newly born lambs which can cause miscarriage. Therefore any expectant mums are requested to avoid all contact with newly born lambs.

### **Safety Equipment / Clothing**

Warm clothing is recommended for your comfort, together with a long sleeved top –The temperature underground is a constant 12° C. A hard hat is also available for those visitors going to Bone Cave. Sturdy, sensible footwear is recommended. Also, in very wet weather, "Welly Boots" are a good idea. Please remember, any pathway underground or outside can become slippery if wet. These conditions should be taken in to account when making your way around the site.

Please note that appropriate sun screens are recommended for use, particularly during the long hot summer days !

### **Underground Activities**

As previously stated, all groups must remain under the supervision of the adult in charge of the specific group. No group should leave the clearly marked underground lit pathways. School groups are NOT allowed into the showcaves without a teacher to supervise.

Torches are available at the entrance to Dan-yr-Ogof Cave and Cathedral Cave – each group should have a torch with them when going underground.

Back up lighting is provided by a battery-operated system, a diesel generator, and a water turbine. This is subject to regular testing by the duty manager and is recorded accordingly.

Visitors must use and wear any items provided in the interests of health and safety.

In the event of an emergency please inform a member of staff when exiting the cave. Within Dan-yr-Ogof Cave there is also a 'telephone emergency' system, which connects to the outside. These are seen in the cave as 3 'intercom boxes' from which communication can be maintained.

### **Water Courses & Ponds**

The venue includes a number of ponds, a stream, and a river. (Access to the river, and stream is restricted to venue staff only). The ponds are part of the visitor attraction, and as such visitors can come into close proximity with them. Naturally, care and supervision is needed when viewing these ponds. Slightly raised banks are also used to warn of these water features. Pictorial signs are also in place to clearly indicate the presence of water.

**Other Relevant Information**

(including items not covered above or where details of any of the above specifications cannot be met)

The above information covers most aspects of a day trip to the visitor attraction. Additional activities such as our dry ski slope, and camping site, are also available. Further information can be provided on these if required.

**Signed**

<i>Date</i>	29 April 2005
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