# General Organisation

These sessions are usually run outside normal club meeting times, either on a weekday evenings or Saturdays. They are not normally run during the winter months.

They are aimed at groups such as youth organisations, work parties, clubs, birthday parties and any other group who would like to have a session but not necessarily want to take up canoeing as a sport.

Bookings are made via the club website to the Membership Secretary who then tries to organise the session on a suitable date.

The group leader is given advice on what the participants should wear and what to bring with them.

The sessions are always run with at least one level 2 coach in attendance. The coach will take control when on the water and will hold the pre-water briefing but other club members may be in charge of the event overall.

Where the group includes juniors or vulnerable adults all coaches and helpers in attendance are required to have successfully satisfied a current CRB check.

All coaches and helpers will be familiar with the club’s [risk assessment](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CGeoff%5CDocuments%5CA%20Maidstone%20Canoe%20Club%5CManual%5CManual%20V3%5CMCC%20Documents%5Crisk%20assessment%20fun%20sessions.docx)

For youth organisations and junior groups the leaders are encouraged to participate with the on-water activities.

The number of participants is limited to a maximum of 14. For groups larger than 6 normally 2 coaches are required with additional level 1 coaches and experience club paddlers.

A charge is made for the use of club equipment. No charge is made for any tuition or coach’s and club member’s time.

The club maintains a number of kayaks and canoes that are suitable for beginners, i.e. they are stable and can be paddled in a straight line relatively easily.

# Procedure for Running the Session

The session will only go ahead if the weather and water conditions are considered suitable by the coach, the safety of the participants is of prime importance even if this means disappointment for the group.

The participants are shown the changing and shower facilities.

Participants are asked about their previous paddling experience and their swimming ability, and any medical condition that could affect their safety. This may also be done via e-mail at the booking stage.

A signed [parental consent](Parental%20Consent%20Form.docx) form is required for all participants under the age of 18. This includes information on the participant’s swimming ability and if there is a medical condition that should be known about.

They are supplied with a suitable kayak/canoe, buoyancy aid and paddle. The BA’s are checked for correct fitting. The boat’s foot rest and back rest are adjusted where this is necessary.

When all are ready and coaches are ready the group is instructed on how to carry boats and are invited to carry their boats down to the slipway. Help is given to juniors and anybody else where this is necessary.

The coach in charge will give a pre-water briefing which will include at least:- basic paddle use, what to do if a capsize occurs, rules of travelling on a river and warnings about other river craft, especially rowers.

The coach and experienced helpers get on the water first while others help the beginners to launch.

When all paddlers are on the water a coach may give basic tuition on keeping a kayak going straight.

The fun sessions are tailored to the needs of the group.

For example youngsters generally want a short paddle and then some fun and games.

Typical Paddle Games:

* Foxes and Chickens (also known as stick in the mud)
* Polo
* Relay races
* Raft Running

Adult groups are often taken to Allington Lock where they can get out for a leg stretch/rest or a snack/picnic. (picnics are normally pre-arranged and provided by the group not MCC).

During the trip if any of the party is clearly struggling with the paddling, is unduly worried or appears to be cold the coach will ask if they want to continue. If the coach thinks it is necessary, for whatever reason, a participant may be asked to leave the water, in which case they will be accompanied by another coach or experienced paddler back to the clubhouse area. The coaches and helpers carry tow lines should these be necessary.

Often youngsters ask if they can jump into the river from the bank. This is permitted if the group leader is in agreement and the coach considers the weather and water conditions are suitable. The jumping in session is controlled by the coach to ensure that they are still wearing their BA’s, that they jump only when there is cover from experienced paddlers on the water and that they jump only in the place designated by the coach. All those who have jumped in are told to get showed and changed immediately afterwards.

Showers are available for all paddlers.

# Equipment to be carried by the coach or other experienced helper

Mobile Phone – in case of an emergency while on the water

Spare dry clothing - normally only required if the weather is wet, cold or windy

First aid kit – the club’s main first aid kit is kept in the clubhouse but a small first aid kit is taken on the water consisting of:

Tow lines – in case any of the party needs help

# Responsibilities

A coach level 2 or above is responsible for maintaining control on the water, helped by other coaches and experienced paddlers.

The club’s Membership Secretary is responsible for arranging the date and contacting coaches and helpers to ensure there is enough cover for safety purposes.