

Group Leaders Guidelines for use of Castlerigg Manor, Keswick



Introduction

Firstly we would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your support of Diocese of Lancaster Youth Service and Castlerigg Manor. Whether you are bringing a group for the first time or have brought many groups over many years we recognise the work that goes on behind the scenes to make these visits happen and to ensure they are a good experience for young people. We are aware of the support that goes on before and after these opportunities and know that the visit to Castlerigg that young people experience is only a small part of the whole picture.

These guidelines for group leaders are presented in order to support this work and to ensure a safe and valuable experience for our young people and all who use the centre. Please do speak to us directly about any of the points made and to seek further clarification and help at any point. We fully respect and appreciate school / group guidelines within which group leaders and their teams will work in. These points are presented to ensure the Lancaster Youth Service works within agreed guidelines and ask for your support in applying these.

Booking and information

Bookings are confirmed through the Business Manager at Castlerigg. If you wish to make or amend a booking please speak directly. Please also see our general terms and conditions under which bookings are made.

Please provide as much information you can at the time of booking and provide the information relating to group size and special requirements in good time to ensure we can deal with your requests.

The member of staff responsible for your group within Castlerigg will speak to you at least one week before your visit to ensure all your requirements have been taken in to consideration. We can provide timetables in advance upon request, but you will generally be presented with a timetable upon arrival.

Group work

Staff from your party *may* be asked to lead a small group of young people as part of the retreat programme if the Youth Service staff are leading the programme. We would ask you to share the attached group leader notes prior to the visit, so that adults are aware of our expectations around group work. Castlerigg provides an informal setting and the group work we do is an important part of the process. Young people's experience and confidence in this will vary, however we see the value in providing young people with an opportunity to share and listen to each other in a supportive environment.

Space for staff

A common room is provided for staff after meals and at the end of the day. Staff groups are welcome to bring a limited amount of their own alcohol which can be stored in a locked fridge in this area. We ask that one male adult and one female adult is assigned

each night as designated contact person in case of emergency. These staff members would be expected to stay professionally sober in order to assist Youth Service staff should an emergency situation arise and matters needed to be dealt with. We would require someone to be able to accompany our staff to Accident and Emergency should the need arise.

Night time supervision – consistency and authority

Staff members supporting the young people during their time on retreat will vary in experience depending on their role in the school. We request that agreement is made prior to the first night supervision as to how this will be handled by the group of staff attending with your group. Consistency is important and any new member of staff accompanying the group would be required to have been guided in this. Changeover of responsible staff during the course of a retreat may have an influence on the effectiveness of night time supervision. Getting things right on the first night really helps in building expectations for the rest of the week. This further emphasises the need for an agreed approach from all staff. After the retreat program has finished for the evening we expect that young people are directed straight to their rooms and encouraged to settle within half an hour. It is unhelpful at this point to restart social time when upstairs. Effective settling of young people requires staff to be in attendance within 20 minutes of the young people going upstairs. Once the program for the evening has finished Youth Service team are off duty and the on-call number provided on arrival then applies.

Supervision in Keswick Town Centre

Currently our programme offers an opportunity for young people to visit the town centre. We ask staff to remain visually present around the town to support young people whilst there. Relations with local shopkeepers are generally good, however it is necessary for staff to ensure their group is suitably advised about behaviour from both Castlerigg staff and school staff. Where concerns may be raised Castlerigg staff will ask for extra vigilance during the town visit.

Noise levels during the evening

We are required to consider our neighbours around the centre and will seek to ensure noise in the evening is kept to a reasonable level. Young people are asked to stay on the first level of the gardens or to remain indoors after 9pm in the evening. Staff are asked to be vigilant in relation to shouting between rooms particularly via outside windows. Staff should also ensure that no litter is discarded from windows on to the main road at the rear of the centre.

Adhering to and supporting Centre rules

It is our intention to sincerely welcome young people to our centre. We therefore keep our rules to a minimum. Those we do have we expect to be adhered to and we ask for the support of staff in this. Our basic rules relate to:

Movement between rooms- we would expect and encourage young people to respect each others rooms and generally not to enter someone else's room. Over and above this there is a clear expectation that boys should not be in girls' rooms and girls should be in boys' areas for any reason. Young people may find themselves prevented from attending other events if this is not followed, others have been sent home because of this. Staff have a vital role in supporting the enforcement of this. Young people may be asked to leave if this is not respected.

Alcohol and drugs – we would not expect to see young people consuming either of these during their time at on retreat and state this on the first evening.

No smoking – smoking in the building puts everybody at risk and prohibition of smoking is part of our strict policy. We ask staff to be vigilant.

Young people should be advised that they will be requested to leave should any of the above Centre rules are not followed.

Mobile phones

We recommend that any young person attending the centre is discouraged from bringing their mobile phone. As part of the retreat program we encourage young people to 'step back' and take time out. We provide a payphone to allow young people to contact family. It is our preference that any groups who allow young people to bring phones allow them to be used in the evening break only. We will securely store them during the day and after the evening break.

Other groups using the centre

There are a number of groups using the centre which may not relate specifically to school parties or other formally organised groups. Where our centre is being used, general respect and translation of the above guidelines are requested. The building will be expected to become quiet after midnight. The games room will close at this time. All young people under the age of 18 would be expected to be settled in their rooms and properly supervised within the building by this time at the latest.

Notes for Leading Groups

Thank you for agreeing to support the group work at Castlerigg Manor. We would wish to point out a few helpful reminders about how groups work here at the Manor and would encourage you to familiarise yourself with them before the retreat begins.

- Leading group during a Castlerigg retreat aims to allow young people time and space to share, listen, input and develop. Some groups will be activity based and a clear outcome will be expected, but a number of groups you may be asked to lead and support will be sharing groups, whose main emphasis is on sharing and support of young people. Whilst respecting the skills of staff that attend and support their young people we ask you to consider the following if you are leading a group.
- Please be aware of the different environment – whilst a lot of young people come with school to Castlerigg, this is not school and it will sometimes be enough to encourage young people to share, listen and be honest rather than achieve a set outcome.
- Emphasise the need for trust and confidentiality around anything shared.
- Encourage the young people to listen to each other.
- Don't fear silence too quickly. In response to silence, we suggest to wait and then perhaps share a thought, reflection yourself which may stimulate conversation once again.
- Please ensure all young people are involved and adjust space if required.
- Please try to accept young people's ideas and avoid leading the group unnecessarily to complete a task in your way.
- Do avoid creating a classroom expectation of the group. Our groups are much more informal.
- Youth Service team regularly lead groups and will welcome thoughts and suggestions during a retreat to gain the best from group work carried out. If you are co-leading a group with one of our team please take time to review the process and discuss how the group is working