

# Hanover Primary School

## Camping

### 2014

<https://vimeo.com/70313977>

We are very pleased to be able to invite your child to our fifth Hanover camping trip. As I expect you are aware, we have already talked about the trip with your child. The last four camps have been a huge success. Almost every child in Year 6 has attended and all who went gave us fantastic feedback. Choice quotes include:

"When I got back home, I didn't watch TV and such things as much, which was a nice surprise."

"If I just take a bit of time and go to the forest, there are so many exciting things to learn."

"It helped me to be more independent."

"We learnt about all the things we take for granted."

"I learnt to cope on my own without many modern conveniences...It taught me many things I wouldn't have realised."

"I learnt to appreciate what we have at home, bonding with people we don't know so well and how to survive in the middle of nowhere."

We want this year's camp to be an equally special experience for your child, as they come to the end of their time at Hanover.

## **The Project**

The funding for setting up this camp comes from an organisation called the Paul Hamlyn Foundation ([www.phf.org.uk](http://www.phf.org.uk)). Through their 'Learning Away' initiative, they have provided grants to a range of schools across Britain to set up innovative residential experiences, in the belief that these can have real impact on pupils' learning. They hope to develop a range of ideas that can be rolled out across schools.

We are committed to setting up back to basics camping trips. Over the next few years we hope that they can become part of the experience for Hanover children throughout the school, enabling us to build and share skills year on year. We also hope to share the model with other schools across Islington and beyond.

## **This Year**

This year we intend to run a camp for all Year 6 pupils from **19<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> May**. We will take about 14 members of staff with us, some from school and some external, trained volunteers.

The trip will be focused around social and emotional learning. Your child will experience living in a new, exciting way, in a community in which we will all be reliant on each other to make things work. We hope the children will be centrally involved in running activities and making decisions on camp. In no particular order, the type of things we might do include:

- Cooking for the rest of camp, including wood chopping and fire lighting.
- Putting up and sleeping in tents.
- Building (and maybe sleeping in) our own shelters.
- Building things like dressers for our kitchen, or a stage for an end-of camp show.
- Learning about different types of wood and their uses.

- Thinking about how we live and build our camp to have minimal impact on the environment.
- Going for walks and maybe a night hike.
- Sports and games.
- Map reading and navigation.
- A range of arts and crafts, such as learning to whittle and carve, or making and using natural dyes.
- Lots of creative dressing up, drama, art and music.
- Opportunity to reflect, think about and talk about ourselves and each other.
- Opportunities to forge and develop friendships.
- Quite a lot of independence, silliness and fun.

The exact program will be something we develop on camp, in response to the weather, the children's interests and our own. We intend to be flexible and work out a lot of decisions collectively.



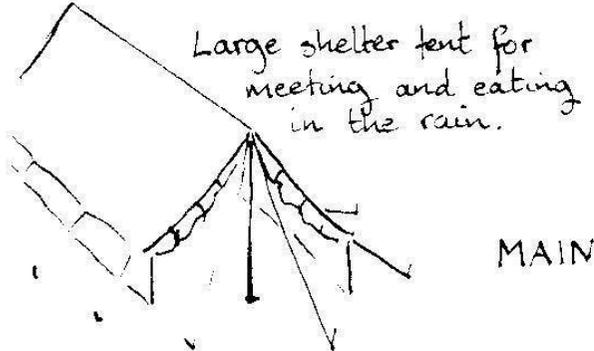
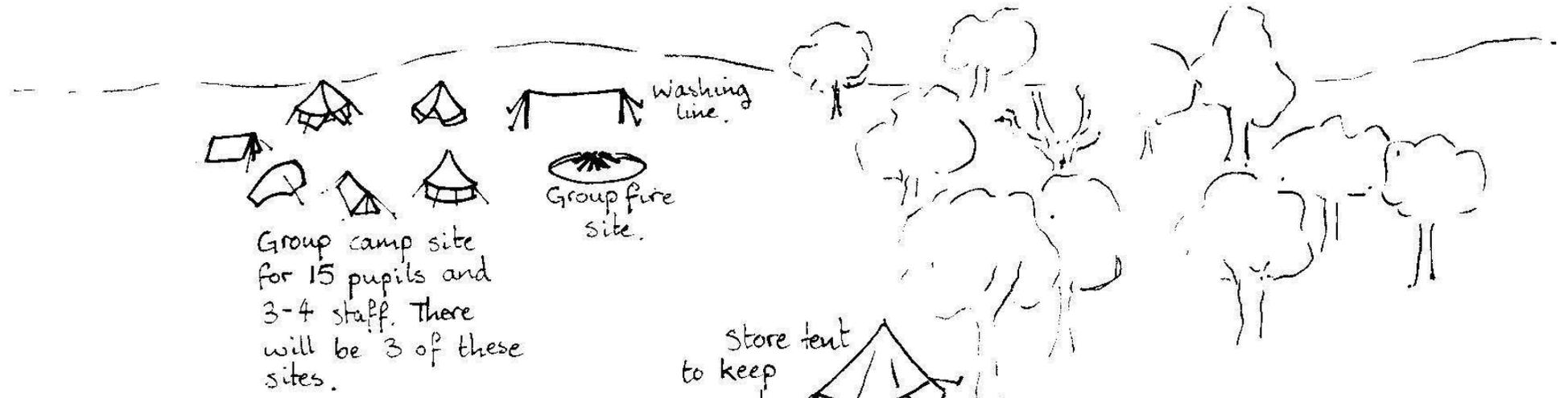
Shelter Building

## Where

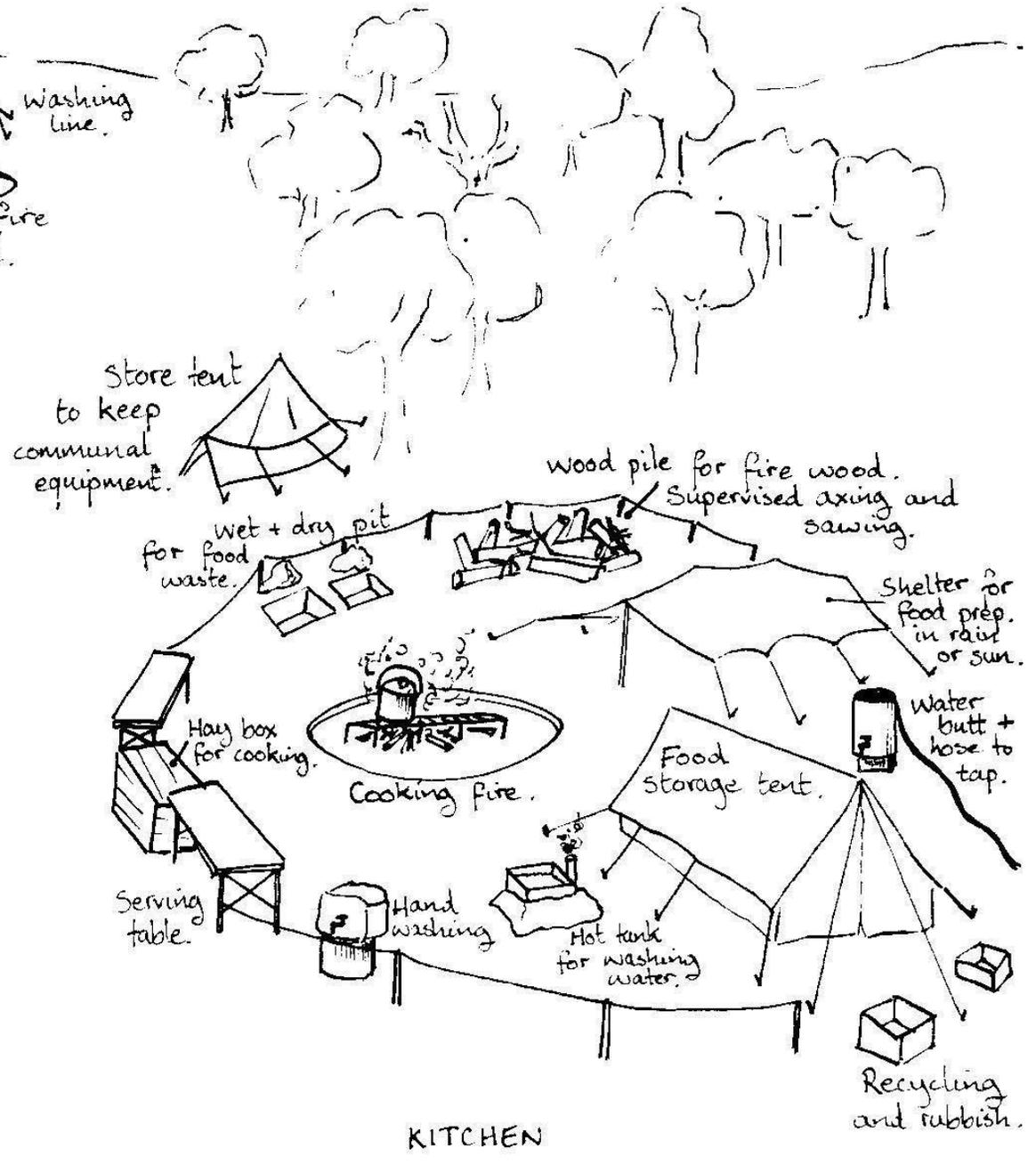
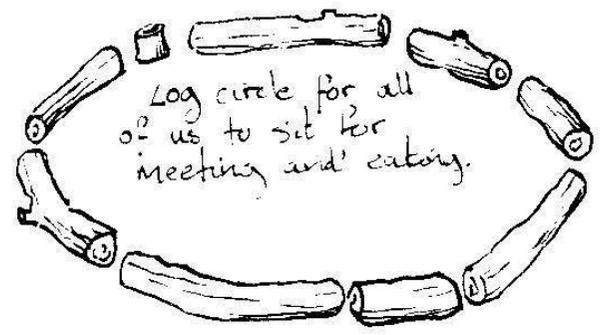
The site will be in Epping Forest, at Debden House, where we have been for the last two years. The site is close to London, and we can get there on the tube, which minimises the cost and time of travelling. The field we use at Debden feels secluded, as it is out of sight of buildings or roads. It offers woodland we can use and piped drinking water. We are able to build fires there. The site is also safe. It has clear boundaries, with controllable access. It is away from dangerous sources of water and is patrolled by security guards at night.

## Structures

The Physical Structure of Camp (see diagram on next page): The centre of camp will be a kitchen site, large log sitting circle, large shelter tent and a store tent. The kitchen will be roped off to limit access and will be based around a cooking fire pit with a grid to place pots on. There will be a large kitchen tent in which we will store food and a shelter for the preparation of food in the rain or hot sun. There will be piped in water, and the wood pile will be here.



MAIN CAMP





The kitchen

The log circle will be where we gather to eat and meet as a whole group; the large shelter tent a place to eat and meet in the rain. In the store tent we will keep tools and spare equipment.

Apart from the central structures, there will be three group sites in which the children will camp. These will be separate to give the children the security of belonging to a smaller 'family' within the main camp. There will be fifteen children in each group with 3-4 members of staff, who will have direct responsibility for them. The children will sleep in groups of four or five in 'bell tents' (see picture) and the staff in their own or similar tents, in a circle together. There will be a group fire site and the children will be able to decorate, name and plan their site themselves.

As well as being in their 'family' group, the children will also spend some time in the kitchen in smaller groups, cooking for the rest of the camp.

There will also be a member of staff with an overview of the whole camp and another in charge of ordering and organising the food.

The Structure of each Day: The children will be woken by their staff in the morning. They will dress and brush teeth and then go down to the kitchen for breakfast. This will be followed by a meeting and morning activities.

After lunch, there will be a quiet rest hour, in which the children will stay on their group site and read, write home and so on.

There will then be afternoon activities, followed by dinner and an evening activity before bed. The evening activities are likely to be based around a fire, either all together or in groups.

At bedtime the children will be helped into their tents by their staff, who will all stay at the group site and hold a group meeting until the children are all settled and mostly asleep. There will be a lantern left alight on each group site alight throughout the night.

The staff may then gather round the kitchen fire for a staff meeting to plan the following day. Each group site is placed so that they are fully visible and audible from the kitchen fire. An adult from each group will return to their group site to check on the children every ten minutes or so.



Camp Fire

## **Food**

We will be designing menus and ordering food ourselves, so we can be as flexible as necessary. We will cater for all allergies and diets and make sure that food is not a barrier to your child attending or enjoying the camp.

We will monitor your child's diet closely and make sure they are eating enough and getting as balanced a diet as possible. We will be flexible in catering to your child's needs.

## Equipment

Shared Equipment: We will provide all the communal equipment for the camp. We will also provide tents for your child to sleep in and if you want we can provide:

- A sleeping bag and roll mat
- Waterproof jacket and trousers



The type of tent your child will sleep in.

We will also provide tools such as small axes, knives and wood-carving equipment. We will teach your child to respect such tools and use them properly. We will make sure that your child is supervised when using them.

### Notes about packing:

- Labelling - all clothing and equipment should be indelibly labeled with your child's name.
- Please involve your child in their packing. A surprising number of items can be lost because children did not know that they brought them in the first place, or did not know where they were packed.

### Please also note that:

- Jeans are tough but terrible to wear when wet, so bring a variety of types of trousers.
- At least one light top should be long sleeved with a collar to protect against the sun by day, and insects by night.
- Clothing that can be worn in many layers is much more flexible, and allows adjustment to the weather and conditions better.

### Your child will need:

### Clothing:

- Trainers
- Wellies
- 3 warm tops (sweatshirts etc)
- 3 pairs of trousers/jeans
- 2 warm woolen jerseys or fleeces
- thick socks, two woolen pairs
- 2 sets of pyjamas
- sunhat
- /fleece hat and gloves
- handkerchiefs/tissues
- 2 shorts/dress/skirt
- 5 light tops (T-shirts etc)
- 7 pairs of socks
- 7 sets of underclothing

### Miscellaneous:

- cloth bag containing:
  - plastic mug
  - deep plate
  - knife, fork and spoon
- sponge bag containing:
  - flannel, soap and nailbrush
  - toothbrush and paste
  - comb/hairbrush
- towels, two medium size
- torch and spare batteries
- notebook and pencil
- paper and stamps (for writing home)
- plastic bin liners (for keeping things clean and dry)
- sunblock

### Optional

- insect repellent
- musical instrument (nothing too valuable or fragile - it will be living in a field for a week)
- 'dressing up' clothes
- materials for making things (e.g. embroidery thread)

### **Mobile Phones, handheld gaming devices and other such electrical things**

We are going to be strict about these. The aim of this camp is to enable your child to experience a back-to basics way of living, in which we rely on each other for support and entertainment. Gadgets such as Nintendo DS's are not what we have in mind and we do not want them on camp.

Our experience is that the ability to contact you with a mobile phone increases rather than decreases home sickness. Mobile phones will not be allowed on camp. It is possible there will be no reception where we camp, which would be distressing for your child if they felt obliged to contact you. Giving your child something we have banned puts them in the stressful position of having to break rules. They would also have to worry about finding time to sneak around and contact you.

Please do not let your child come to camp with a mobile phone, DS, PSP or other such device.

We will have mobiles available to contact you if there is any kind of major problem and you will have these numbers to ring before we leave. If you hear nothing from us, it will be because your child is having a great time. We will keep our mobiles turned off in the field, but will check them regularly in case you have tried to contact us.

### **Preparation**

We will keep you informed of developments with this year's camping trips via letters and through a page on our website (see: [www.hanover.islington.sch.uk](http://www.hanover.islington.sch.uk))

We will also hold several meetings over the next few months in order to ensure you are fully informed.

We will teach your child how to use some of the equipment for camp in advance and ensure that they understand the structure and expectations of camp well before we leave.

### **Health & Safety**

We want the camping experience to be exciting for your child, but safe. There will be a range of dangers on camp. We will be living outside, in an unfamiliar environment, cooking on fires and using tools. We have drawn up a comprehensive range of risk assessments before camp and all staff will be fully versed in these. You will be welcome to see them as well. Last year, everyone got home safe and sound.

### **Staffing:**

One of the key ways in which we will ensure the safety of your child is by maintaining a high staff to child ratio and ensuring suitable supervision of activities. Staff will have the following experience and training:

- Several members of staff will receive full 1<sup>st</sup> aid training before camp;
- The member of staff with particular responsibility for the kitchen is an experienced cook, both in commercial indoor and outdoor kitchens. He has received suitable food hygiene training.
- Most members of staff who will be going are experienced campers.
- Jack is a member of staff for a camping charity called Forest School Camps. He has run camps, catered for camps and run training courses for staff.
- Many of the staff who will be attending the camp are very experienced at running school journeys. Mark in particular has organised them for Years 5 and 6 for a number of years.

- Staff will go on a weekend training and planning camp before the main camp takes place.
- All staff who attend the camp will be DBS checked.

Physical safety: The greatest danger to your child will probably come from exposure to sun and dehydration. To keep your child safe we will:

- Ensure your child wears sunscreen and protective clothing;
- Seeks shade on a regular basis;
- Drinks water regularly;
- Children will be trained to use tools appropriately;
- Children will be taught to be safe around fire;
- All activities will be supervised.
- First aid kits will be to hand for all activities.
- We will have made contact with local GPs and hospitals before camp and have vehicles to get your child to medical aid.
- At nighttimes we will keep careful watch over all the children.
- You will be informed of any major injuries as soon as possible.
- We will ask you for medical details on your child before the trip so that we are fully prepared and informed.

Emotional Safety: We recognise that the newness of camp and being away from home can be tough for children. Friendships will develop quickly within groups and change. We will keep a very close watch to ensure you child is coping well and making the most of the camping experience. We will discuss groups and children regularly and act quickly to resolve any issues that emerge. We will also ask you for your advice about your child before the trip, so that we are as prepared as we can be.

Hygiene: Because we will be camping outside, we will stress hygiene and ensure children follow clear routines:

- All kitchen implements will be washed before and after use;
- Children will wash hands before preparing food and before eating;
- Food will be kept securely and in the absence of refrigeration food that can go off will be used as soon as it is delivered;
- Your child will have opportunity to wash and bathe if required.

Toilets: As we are trying to get away from modern conveniences, we will dig latrines to use as toilets. These will be enclosed in ventilated, purpose built tents. Each group site will have their own latrine, which is lit so that children can use it at night. We will teach your child to use them and manage your child through any difficulties they might have with them. Latrines are completely hygienic. Although they are not the most delightful things in the world, they caused very few problems for any of the children last year.

## Cost

Our aim is to make the trips as affordable as possible. The cost this year is £100 per child.

If this sum is a barrier to your child camping, we would like to offer you support. Please ask Jack or Mark. All conversations about money will be treated with complete confidence. Alternatively, if you feel able to pay more to support another child camping, contributions above £100 would be very welcome.

## What Next

We will soon send a letter home soon asking you for a firm commitment and setting a date for a meeting at which you'll be able to ask us questions and find out more.

In the meantime, if you have any questions or concerns about the trip, please feel free to call or come in and see Jack Mark or Kathryn. at any time.



Why not watch the film which Lottie Davies made on camp last year? It demonstrates the impact that camping has on children at Hanover, and will give you an idea of some of the activities we do.

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