

Canoeing / Kayaking

Guidelines on Induction of new members / participants

The following guidelines set out what should be included in the induction of new members to Castle Canoe Club, and also some suggestions about additional activities you could include if you feel comfortable doing so and the inductees are keen to continue on the water. *You will find advice on ways to run each section in blue italics.*

The guidelines are set up in a suggested order of delivery, but there are some components that could be covered at a number of different places during the induction e.g. How to join Castle, how to sign off the water and disinfect your equipment. Please do feel free to move these around during your induction delivery if you'd prefer to cover them at a number point.

This guide covers:

- [Introduction](#) – where to meet, info on inductees, accessing next session
- [Site layout and health and safety issues](#) including Covid restrictions, water diseases.
- [Equipment – BA, paddle, kayaks](#)
- [Before moving to the water's edge](#) – where to paddle, health and safety on the water, what to do when finished paddling
- [On the pontoon](#) – getting in and out of kayak
- [On the water – basic skills, information about Castle Canoe Club, option of a journey](#)
- [Extras](#) – spray deck tests, experienced paddlers, GLL support

Introduction – first 5 minutes

- **Where to meet:** Ask inductees to sign in at the duty desk and then wait next to the fence near the kayak store. (Leaving space for other members to sign in and access the site) Ensure a prompt start, late arrivals or those not on the induction list will be asked to sign up for / attend the next Induction.
- **Info about the inductees:**
 - During Covid restriction, the committee will have collected medical disclosure and emergency contacts from the inductees in advance via the online Eventbrite form and will share any relevant information with inductors in advance of the session by e-mail.
 - We recommend asking the group if there is anything you haven't disclosed and you think we should know about, please do let me know before we get onto the water.
 - If someone is asthmatic, ensure they take their inhaler onto the water with them.
 - Remind everyone that they need to be able to swim 50m while wearing a buoyancy aid in order to paddle.
- **How to access the 2nd and 3rd sessions:** Inductees should receive a card (stored in the duty folder in the Castle cupboard - Inductors should give this to inductees) at the start of their induction and be instructed to bring it the 2nd and 3rd time they want to paddle – this is how we will keep track of how many times inductees have attended Castle. If they don't have the card then they won't be able to paddle unless they join as a member.
- Start by introducing yourself and briefly explain what will be covered in the induction

Site layout and health and safety

- **Introduce inductees to the site layout** including Covid-19 protocols
 - Explain where the toilets changing rooms, lockers, kit stores, fire exits and muster points are. (Good to know for post Covid restrictions)
 - Highlight the current Covid-19 restrictions as they relate to changing areas, physical distancing, one-way systems, spacing on the pontoons
- **Explain the health and safety issues**
 - **Weils Disease / Blue green algae** – the importance of washing after being in the water, covering up cuts and letting your doctor know you have been in outdoor water if you feel unwell.
 - **The importance of wearing the correct footwear** – no flip flops, shoes need to stay on when in the water and the need to be able to swim 50m while wearing a buoyancy aid.
 - **Dangers associated with wet/slippery floors** i.e. No running, the ramps and edges of the reservoir are very slippery and in the side floors of the centre can also be slippery.
 - *Advice on how to run this section: suggest you either run this section at the meeting point or find another area away from the duty desk where there is space to talk to the group without block walk ways for other site users.*
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Equipment

- **Buoyancy Aid:** Inductor will show the location of and instruct how to select and wear personal buoyancy (BA).
 - **Choose a BA** by selecting the smallest size you can comfortably fit in, adjust using the straps at the top and sides, test that it fits by lifting it up via the top straps - the BA should stay on the body rather than slip off in case of a rescue.
 - BA should be zipped and clipped up, be worn on the outside of a cag and remain on at all times when on the water or beyond the white railings of the site.
 - *Advice on how to run this section:*
 - *We recommend that you demonstrate how to zip up, tighten and check your BA outside the room during Covid restrictions, then allow people to go in and collect the right size BA. It can be quicker for you to advise inductees what size they require*
 - *During Covid restrictions please ask inductees to test their own BA for size rather than pull the straps yourself. You can advise them from a distance.*
- **Paddles:** Inductor will show the location of, and advise on how to select paddles
 - **Introduce different paddles.** We recommend you briefly introduce the sea kayak paddle (longer for greater efficiency in a bigger craft), canoe paddles (one sided various sizes), SUP paddles (adjustable), solid black paddles for use in polo (no curve so are less dangerous for collisions, but then focus on the red paddles which are what most inductees will use for the first few sessions.
 - **Explain left and right** sided markings on the paddles
 - **Show inductees how to choose a paddle** that is suitable for the boat they are going to use and their size, e.g. roughly the size of their outreached arm.
 - *Advice on how to run this section:*

- *We recommend that you talk through this outside the room during Covid restrictions, then allow people to go in and collect a paddle*
 - *You can either demonstrate how to use a paddle in this section, or wait until you are at the kayak shed where there is more space.*
- **Kayaks:** Inductor will show the location of the different kayaks, introduce their use briefly then introduce inductees to the craft they will paddle that day
 - **Types of craft:**
 - New participants would normally be put into an Open Cockpit Kayak (Kiwi or SOT), if you are dealing with an experienced paddler, that has completed a capsize drill, they may use a Closed Cockpit Kayak, but observe them, it will be apparent if they can paddle.
 - Recommend you briefly show inductees where the sea kayaks, canoes, SUPs, slalom boats, play boats, polo boats are so they have a sense of the different crafts that would be available to them.
 - Explain that most of these craft will be available to them to try out once they have taken a spray deck test, but that we recommend asking members or the duty officer for help in choosing / trying out a new craft.
 - **Open cockpit kayaks – how to carry**
 - Get inductees to help you take the open cockpit kayaks out of the shed.
 - Talk through safe manual handling, working in pairs, safe ways of getting boats on and off the racking, asking for assistance. Explain that all kayaks and canoes have a particular place on the racking, unless returned correctly all the boats won't fit.
 - Demonstrate how to lift kayaks safely in pairs, bending from the knees as outlined in the manual handling policy.
 - **Open cockpit kayaks – how to enter / exit and sit in.**
 - **Explain and demonstrate how to get in and out** of the kayak on dry land at the shed. (Keep a low centre of gravity, ideally sit on the back of the boat as you get in, keep one hand on the front of the boat and one on the pontoon as you get in).
 - **Explain and demonstrate how to sit in a kayak:** knees out to the side, so you are connected to the boat and in control of how it moves. We recommend you ask people to try out what it feels like to move side to side in the boat on dry land with their knees in the side vs in the middle of the boat so they get a sense of the greater control feel before they get in the water.
 - **How to use the paddle**
 - **Explain and demonstrate how to hold the paddle:** Importance of being able to read the logo, to ensure the asymmetric paddles are being used the right way up, having arms shoulder width apart.
 - **Explain and demonstrate how to use the paddle:** Loose grip in one hand so you can twist the paddle freely.

Before moving down to the water edge:

- **Transporting equipment:** Brief the inductees on how to transport equipment

safely, including team work and care of equipment, such as not dragging the boats as this wears through the hulls.

- **Launching equipment:**
 - Which areas are safe to launch and exit the water from, including how to launch from the pontoons.
 - Taking care of the equipment – e.g. importance of having the boat floating to prevent damage from screws on the ramp, and being aware of plus the metal supports on the bank that can gouge a hole in the hull of a boat.
 - Being aware of other users, particularly sailing boats launching or coming alongside as they are limited on where they can launch / land.
 - If using the New River, the risk of stings etc., from bankside flora,
- **What to do when finished paddling:**
 - **During Covid restrictions** everyone needs to spray their boats and paddles with the disinfectant spray located at the top of the ramp, dip their BA and any other fabric equipment such as cags or spray decks in the blue buckets of disinfectant before returning all equipment back to where it came from
 - **Please sign out of the reservoir** before you leave so that the duty officer and GLL staff know that you are no longer on the water.
- **Where to paddle.** New participants will be advised on suitable areas to paddle, in line with their personal experience, the prevailing weather conditions and an awareness of other water users.
 - Point out the harbour area, where would be safe for their levels of experience
 - 3 is a good number for a group,
 - Potential for waves to be caused by wind
 - Caution around sailing boats, and any racing that may be going on.
- **Health and Safety on the water**
 - **How to attract attention** if in difficulty on the water and no one else is nearby
 - If you are still in your boat paddle towards the edge of the reservoir or back to shore, or if you feel unable to paddle, then stay put and wave your arms and shout to attract attention.
 - If you have fallen out of your boat – stay with your boat and either wave your arms to attract attention, or if lay on your back and raise your arm to attract attention.
Your BA will keep you buoyant until someone reaches you. The banks are very slippery and hard to exit from.
 - **What to do in the event of capsiz**e: hold the end of the boat, don't climb over the boat, await rescue and stay with your boat and paddle.
 - **Reduce risk of being hit by other equipment:** Look out for other users, being hit by paddles when close to other paddles. Dangers of dropping boats when getting them on and off the racking. Being hit by sailing boats or their booms.
 - **Avoid Collisions:** particularly with sailing boats, as they are bigger and heavier. Be aware of the area in which swimming and sailing operates.
 - **Be aware of the weather** - the importance of dressing for the weather, wind effects on different parts of the reservoir and also craft choice in windy conditions.
 - **Avoid attacks by wildlife:** Swans can be aggressive, when nesting or with cygnets, give them plenty of space
 - **Preventing sports injuries:** Avoidance by warming up, taking care when lifting and carrying, use of good technique on the water, warming down at the end of a session.
- **Advice on how to run this section:**
 - *We recommend that you take the group down to the white railings if there is space available to show where to launch equipment, paddle and point out*

- some of the potential hazards.*
- *Then return to the boat storage to transport the boats down to the pontoon*

On the pontoon

- **Demonstrate getting in and out of the kayak / canoe again on the water.** Then supervise the new participants getting in and out, at least a couple of times, before they paddle
- *Advice on how to run this section:*
 - *We recommend that two inductors lead the group in taking the boats down to the water so the inductors are on the pontoon able to manage where the inductees park their boats (ideally spread out across the back rather than all bunching near the slip way.*
 - *If there are three inductors available recommend one gets on the water so they can keep the group together as they get onto the water, with the final inductor joining after the last inductee is on the water.*

On the water

- **The basics:** Take the participants for a paddle, initially in the areas between the pontoons.
 - Give some 'top tips' on how to hold the paddle and basic turning strokes.
 - Hold the paddles correctly with hands shoulder width apart with a loose grip so you can rotate the paddle.
 - Using sweep strokes – importance of looking where you want to turn,
- **A journey:** We recommend that if time and weather conditions allow that the inductor introduces the top tips on basic forward paddling and turning as part of a journey around the reservoir. Stopping at different points around the reservoir to first demonstrate the move, ask for reflections from the group on what they saw, then getting the group to try the move, giving constructive feedback to anyone struggling with the move.
- This is a good opportunity to also get other members involved as you paddle around the reservoir – introducing the inductees to club members.
- **Castle Canoe Club:** After the inductees have had a chance to get familiar with the kayaks and have a paddle, it is a good time to talk to them a bit more about Castle Canoe Club. Including:
 - **Volunteer run club** – explain that Castle is run by volunteers, are friendly, respectful and open. We don't have trained coaches – instead offering advice to members when it's asked for (encourage them to ask members for help with paddling technique, boat choice etc).
 - **Types of disciplines the club is active in** – polo (3-4 teams including beginners, experienced polo players and a women's team); sea kayaking (a number of active members who go out on trips and are happy to help others to improve their skills at the reservoir); river kayaking (through trips, Lee Valley courses), slalom (newer for Castle, but we have gates, boats and some very experienced members who are keen to support members to improve their skills and attend tournaments).
 - **Types of trips we do** – mix of beginner river trips, to more experienced trips, potentially some sea kayak trips as you gain experience, and Christmas canal trip
 - **How to improve** – informal coaching / tips through the club members –

often announced via Facebook group; reservoir also runs courses; Lee valley courses highly recommended by club members; Castle hope to offer more structured multi-week training for new starters in the near future

- **Social side** – coffees / pub after sessions, regular mix of socials in non Covid times (a bit more mixed/infrequent currently!) ranging from picnics, bake offs, BBQs, to nights out drinking and dancing, great way to make friends, and explore new types of paddling
- **Duty** – explain that all club members take it turns to do duty, welcoming people onto the site, ensuring we know who is on and off the water at all times. And that they will have a few months before they are expected to do duty, will be paired with someone who has done it before and receive a set of detailed instructions on what to do. Doing duty is a condition of club membership.
- **How to join Castle as a member:** Membership costs £110 for 2021-2022 for the full year – including access to Sunday sessions (11-2pm currently) and Tuesday sessions (6-8pm). Account details and joining form are on the website. Please note that this is checked manually, so it may take a few days. Please wait before the confirmation email before starting to come to sessions (e-mailing treasurer@castlecanooclub.co.uk when you have completed the form and transferred the funds may help speed this up).

Extras

- **Observation of 'experienced' paddlers** to assess their skills
 - Looking at them getting in and out, do they look comfortable and in control, is their competence matching the experience they said they had.
- **Capsize drill:** If suitably qualified members are available, and time allows, new participants can be offered a capsize / spraydeck drill.
 - This is entirely optional, and only when they want to progress to closed cockpit kayaks.
 - If they are experienced and observation matches their described experience, then they do not need to do a capsize / spraydeck drill. They are adults.
- If the Inductor or any member of Castle Canoe Club is unsure of any safety or equipment issue, they can seek clarification from a SNWRC Senior Watersports Coach.
 - Ideally the Inductor should be able to answer most if not all the questions from a new participant, but they can ask a SNWRC Senior Watersports Coach if they need help.