

# St. Michael's Environmental Education Centre Information for Parents and Carers



## What is St. Michael's?

St. Michael's Environmental Education Centre opened in 1985, and accommodates up to 38 pupils and staff. It is a residential centre, located on the main road in the village of Hathersage, less than one and a half hours from Nottingham in the heart of the Peak District National Park. Nottinghamshire County Council runs the centre for children from primary and special schools. Pupils visit the Centre with their teachers for several days to a week, for a programme of environmental and outdoor activities. The centre will be solely used by your school during your visit, and is not shared with any other groups.



## What St. Michael's offers

The activities at the centre are carefully chosen by the school and our staff to give the pupils a range of valuable experiences. These aim to help pupils understand the environment more, help them work as a team, support their school work in an exciting way, and give them challenges outdoors. The residential experience itself is a great way for pupils to get to know each other and their teachers, and to learn how to get along with each other. Depending on the weather, a typical programme might include hillwalks, orienteering, problem solving, curriculum linked field studies, conservation, environmental art and much more!

Experienced and qualified staff will lead these activities and no pupil is ever forced to do anything they don't want to. The activities offered are designed so that the young people will succeed at them.

All outdoor clothing and equipment will be provided, but please make sure your child brings plenty of warm clothes and underwear whatever the time of year.

Health and safety is given the highest priority at St. Michael's. Copies of the centre's safety policy and risk assessments are available on request.



## Staffing

There will be a teacher at your child's school who is the named leader of the visit, who has already visited St. Michael's. Teachers and adults accompanying the pupils stay for the whole visit including overnight. St. Michael's staff help them during the day and hold first aid qualifications. At least one teacher or adult from your school group provides the overnight first aid cover.



## During the evening and night

The centre has very comfortable accommodation on two floors with full central heating, separate boys and girls toilets, showers and dormitories for 2 - 10 pupils in each room. The visiting teachers also have sleeping accommodation in adjoining rooms on both levels of the building. They will ensure that the pupils are settled each night before going to bed themselves, having locked all the outside doors.

Fire doors allow exit from all areas of the building (including the upstairs level), and a fire drill is carried out when the group arrives.



## Parents'/carers' and pupils' responsibilities

A residential outdoor visit can offer a young person opportunities and educational experiences that can last a lifetime. The centre has an excellent safety record and any risks during the course are very low. These risks are at a level similar to normal outdoor play.

It is important to ensure that your child understands the need to listen to instructions and behave sensibly. Pupils are briefed on the awareness of 'stranger danger', on arrival at the centre (i.e. not talking to or going off with anyone they do not know).

The outdoor environment can offer some extremely small specific risks, eg. slow moving water can rarely cause an illness (Weil's Disease) which requires antibiotics. Please tell your doctor if flu like symptoms become apparent up to 19 days after the visit.

Children are more likely to become homesick if they phone you during their visit. If there is a need to get a message to you, a member of staff from your school will contact you through the telephone numbers on your completed consent form.

Please note that it is better to leave mobile telephones at home - most don't work at the centre anyway! You can contact St. Michael's in an emergency only on (01433)650309 (office hours) or via your school's emergency contact arrangements (out of hours).



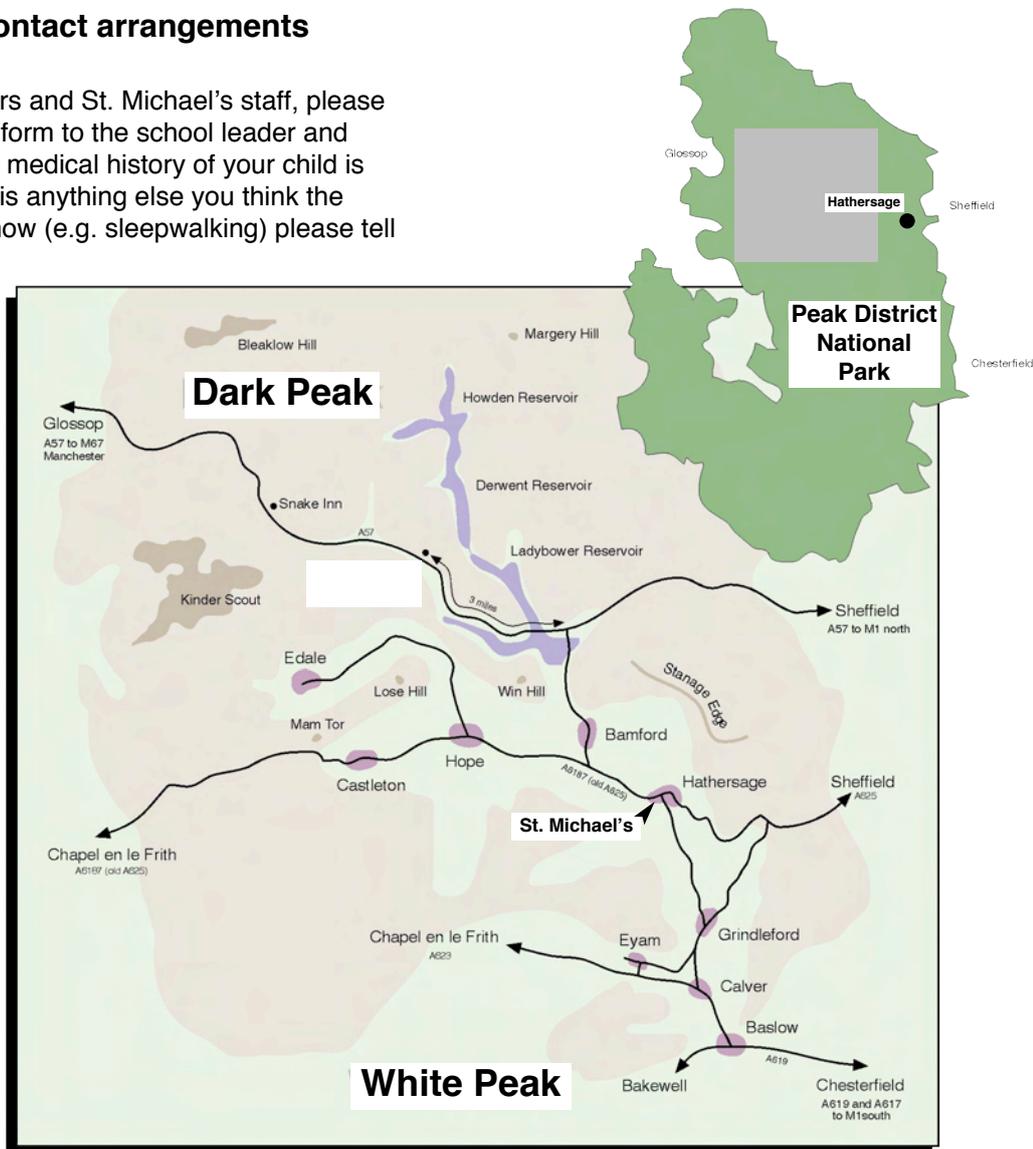
## Finally.....

We are looking forward to welcoming your child to St. Michael's and hope that this information sheet helps answer some of the questions you may have. Your child's school will provide further details and should be able to assist you with any other queries.



## Contact arrangements

To help the teachers and St. Michael's staff, please return the consent form to the school leader and make sure that the medical history of your child is complete. If there is anything else you think the teachers should know (e.g. sleepwalking) please tell them on this form.



Information produced by St. Michael's Environmental Education Centre, which is managed by Nottinghamshire County Council.