

Ormskirk & District Scouts

Indoor climbing wall Operating Procedures (from rule 9.34)

- a. Climbing helmets must always be worn by all those climbing or abseiling on natural features, except in the case of 9.34c.
- b. Climbing helmets need not be worn by those climbing or abseiling on artificial walls provided the activity leader is satisfied that the climber or abseiler has sufficient skill not to react unpredictably. Novices must always wear helmets, except in the case of 9.34c. The use of helmets for climbing using auto belay systems must be determined by the activity risk assessment.
- c. A Sikh wearing a Turban may choose to climb or abseil on natural features and artificial climbing walls without a helmet. This does not apply to a Sikh wearing a Top Knot.
- d. All climbing equipment should be used following the manufacturer's guidelines. Where it is not possible to follow manufacturer's guidelines a backup / redundancy must be built into this element of the setup.
- e. The storing, maintenance and replacement of all climbing equipment should follow the manufacturer's guidelines.
- f. Automatic belay systems (systems that lower a climber down to the ground when they let go of the climbing wall without any human intervention) can be led by either:
 - A climbing permit holder (within the remit of their permit); or,
 - Following a written operating manual which must be agreed by a County Climbing Assessor.

Further information about the automatic belay systems and mobile climbing walls can be found in [FS120427 Climbing – auto belays and mobile walls](#).

- g. Abseiling and climbing activities can be run for non-members, when carried out following these rules, as long as the necessary extension of insurance cover is obtained.

With effect from 1 January 2016, The Scout Association's Public Liability Policy has been extended to automatically cover Scout Groups allowing non-members to take part in their abseiling and climbing activities. There is no longer the need to buy the additional cover (this refers to those who are running or owning climbing activities at a Group level only). Cover is still required to be purchased for Scout campsites and activity centres, District and County owned climbing and abseiling walls. This includes mobile climbing walls used at any Scout premises and/or public events. If you are uncertain of the requirements for additional insurance for climbing and abseiling activities please contact Unity (Scout Insurance Services) for more information.

- h. Other than (g) above, the only persons who may undertake abseiling and climbing activities using Scout equipment and/or under Scout supervision are Members of the Scout and Guide Movements.

Running a session

Session set up

- If conducting roped climbing, collect harnesses, helmets and belay devices. All equipment must be checked prior to use.
- Prepare equipment for any games.
- Check climbing wall for loose/spinning or broken holds.
- Check climbing wall is clean.
- Check toilets are accessible

Session introduction

- Welcome the group – introduce yourself.
- Explain Indoor wall rules –
 - **Green Line – Hands must remain under this unless the climber is wearing a rope. For Beavers, consider making this far lower.**
 - **Empty pockets – instructors are not responsible for smashed iphones etc.**
 - **Remove jewellery – degloving a finger is never clever**
 - **Shoelaces & hoods – tight shoes only., tuck hoods in. No barefoot climbing allowed. Tie back long hair.**
 - **Controlled jumping off – don't dislocate an arm or land on someone below you.**
 - **Always try to descend by down climbing. It's a show of skill.**
 - **Don't climb or walk underneath anyone who is climbing**
 - **Swinging from overhang. It's very hard to climb over the overhang and most people will fall off. Plan for it, and only attempt it when an instructor is supervising you.**
 - **Unused ropes are not toys. They should be tucked out of the way when possible.**
 - **Do not use eye bolts to climb. You'll lose a finger forever very easily.**
 - **No running**
 - **Toilets. Show where they are.**
 - **Emphasise areas where the safety mat is not flush with the wall.**
- Tips and techniques – Footwork, body positioning etc. The best climbers are the most efficient. Use the biggest muscles in your body (in your legs) for doing the work.

Tying in

- Prepare harnesses for Scouters and demonstrate how to put on “like a pair of shorts”.
- Instructor should always communicate with the participants when tying in. Scouts, Explorers and Network should always be shown how to tie in & complete themselves. **EVERY** knot should be checked by the instructor before being used.
- Participants should be asked to stand like a scarecrow, this will allow the instructor to complete a final visual check of all safety elements – **figure of eight, waist harness, jewellery, hair tied back and shoelaces.**

Belaying/ Activity management

- Indoor climbing lessons should always begin with a fun warm up game. **This should not involve running .**
- The instructor should point out some challenges for the participants to attempt such as traversing and boulder problems.
- Instructor must communicate clearly and always encourage all participants.
- Before starting roped climbing, demonstrate how to:
 - Belay (V to knee 123 or similar). More smaller movements are better than fewer large ones.
 - Climb (up, rope between arms)
 - Smile (behind belayer, rope not taut or touching ground)
 - Descend (horizontal legs, shoulder width, slight bend in knees, wait for belayer)
 - Lower a climber (shuffle, both hands remain on rope)
- Adults/Participants belaying
 - Individuals can only belay if the permit that the instructor holds allows for this.
 - No climbing can start before the activity leader has verified the safety of the system
 - No individual should belay before they have physically demonstrated their knowledge to a instructor (I.e. Belaying a weight up and down).
 - Individuals should only belay when at least one 'smiler' is allocated to each rope – this being either another climber or an adult unless a sandbag or other static belay is used.
- Instructor-based belaying
 - If the activity leader is the only person belaying, it is important that every participant receives the opportunity for roped climbing at least once during the session.
 - If the activity leader is belaying, they cannot be supervising bouldering simultaneously. However, a nominated instructor or appointed Leader may supervise bouldering at the same time.
- Climbing ropes must be kept taut from the moment the climber leaves the ground.
- The participant should climb straight up towards the top-rope anchor and not traverse (to avoid swinging injuries).
- Before lowering, the participant should be stable and able to clearly communicate with the belayer
- Lowering procedure- **Give clear instructions and lower with extreme care to ensure no clothing or parts of harness become hooked on a climbing hold. Two hands to remain on the lowering rope at all time and 'shuffle' hands.**
- If participants have a harness on and want to carry on bouldering, it's important that they take off the harness.
- Instructor should try to end the session with a debrief.

Behaviour management

- Sectional leaders are always responsible for the behaviour of the group. Activity leaders are responsible for the safety of the group.

Ending the session

- Collect all equipment back in and prepare for storage. Remove knots from ropes, ensure carabiners are unlocked and no items damaged
- Remove all litter from the climbing wall
- Ensure no lost property has been left in the wall or in the corridor

- Turn off the climbing wall lights
- Return the equipment to storage.
- Secure the key.

Session do's/don'ts

- DO ensure good communication between climbers and participants throughout.
- DO NOT have poor group management- participants allowed to jump off, participants climbing underneath each other. Participants above the green line.
- DO NOT leave a group on their own in the wall.
- DO NOT sit down if you are an activity leader You need to be able to react quickly to all situations.
- DO NOT permit poor belaying.
- DO NOT accept payment in cash. All payment must be done online before the session commences.