

## INFORMATION TO HELP TEACHERS & GROUP LEADERS PREPARE THEIR GROUP FOR ORIENTEERING AT COOKWORTHY FOREST

**Cookworthy can be very wet and muddy under foot. Wellingtons may be advisable under these conditions, and a change of footwear and clothing is recommended.**

**Clothes:** Trainers, tracksuits/jogging trousers.  
(Shorts are not allowed at competition events -a rule of the sport - for safety. Jeans may not be considered suitable for running.)  
Long sleeved T-shirts may be worn if it is a hot day.  
Cagoules or anoraks may be needed if rain is likely.

**Pen or Pencil:** Each competitor will need a pen or pencil to write down the control codes on their control card.

**Compass:** Not essential for the easier courses and should only be brought if the group has been taught how to use it to 'set' the map using the red end of the needle.

**Watches:** Older group members who own watches should be encouraged to wear them so that they return to their group leaders at their appointed time!

**Whistles:** It is also a good idea for each person/pair to carry a whistle and to be given instruction on when and how to use it.

**Pre visit work:** It is advisable that all group members who are visiting a new area for orienteering should have done some preliminary work in the classroom, school hall or grounds so that they understand the following:

- (a) a map is a pattern of shapes:
- (b) symbols are used to depict features on the ground;
- (c) when following a route on a map it is essential to keep the map 'set' so that one always faces the direction of travel.

**Permissions:** If you intend to take a group orienteering, it is essential that permission is obtained first as other activities may be taking place there on the day you intend to visit. Possession of a map does not imply right of access. FC may charge for groups to use the forest.

**Contact:** For further information about the orienteering courses, contact Cookworthy Forest Centre:

Email: [glyn.bradbury@forestry.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:glyn.bradbury@forestry.gsi.gov.uk) telephone: 01409 221692

**Safety:** You should be aware that Cookworthy Forest is part of a working forest, and that there are a number of potential hazards. These include fallen trees and branches (which can be very slippery when wet), uneven ground once you are off the main tracks, fences, water features, etc. Forestry operations may be taking place. Please observe any safety or warning signs. The ground can also be very muddy after periods of heavy rain. You should complete a risk assessment form for your own organisation. If you do not have one, you can download a specimen copy from the website.

**Maps etc:** Maps and control descriptions are obtainable from either Cookworthy Forest Centre or by visiting the website at [www.orienteeringindevon.org.uk](http://www.orienteeringindevon.org.uk). The FC will make a charge for maps sold at the Centre. Maps downloaded from the website are in pdf format and you will require pdf reader software to be able to read and print them off. See the website for further details. You may print off as many copies of the pdf as you wish, and there is no charge.

**Control posts:** The control posts at Cookworthy consist of a rough wooden post approximately 100mm square and 750mm high, marked with a red and white plaque 75mm square on one face. Each control post has an identifying number on the plaque, and code letter routed into the post. The number will correspond to the number on the control description list for the course you are doing, and the letter is to enable you to check that the correct control has been visited. Competitors write down the letter in the appropriate box on their control card. There is a separate list of control numbers/letter codes for you to use to check control cards.



**Start & Finish:** The Start/Finish is marked on the ground by the Start/Finish post which is beside the main track just opposite the Picnic Site. It is marked the map by a purple triangle.

## Upon arrival:

- Sort out the group into pairs. (It is not advisable to send out larger groups together as we find from experience that more than two will argue or chat and lose concentration.)
- Give each group member a map.
- Check that everyone who sets off from the start knows which post(s) they are going to and that they have talked through with one of the helpers which way they are going.
- Extra helpers can be placed around the area to ensure safety.
- It is advisable that group members should try at least some of the star controls first.
- Continue with short courses. You may want to make up slightly longer courses for those who are more experienced or who 'catch on' quickly. However a navigational problem such as going from the start to a far away post is regarded as far too difficult and requiring too many 'decision' points for group members. (Group members can navigate a far more complicated course in their own school grounds than they can in an unfamiliar area, so only give longer or harder courses, to those you are confident can tackle them and only after they have completed the easier tasks.)
- If you progress at a steady pace, all should succeed. It is better that everyone leaves with the idea that orienteering is fun and easy; not that it's about getting lost - in fact, don't even mention the possibility!

## Suggested Exercises:

**Map walk:** It is always advisable to do a short map walk when visiting a new area. During the walk the map should be orientated or 'set' at all times and you should stop and point out the different paths, features, trees etc to familiarise the group with the map.

Example. You could walk from the picnic site out as far as control 01 and 02 on the White course pointing out the various features on the way. Show them a control so that they can see how it is marked. It is best if the walk is done in manageable groups.

**Beginners courses:** Start with the White or Yellow course and progress from there.

**Harder courses:** Do not attempt the more difficult courses until your group have a degree of competence. The Light Green course is hard, and occasionally takes participants off paths and into rough ground. The Green course is very hard and takes participants well away from paths and into some very rough terrain with a number of slip and trip hazards underfoot.