

Macclesfield Forest

Site Information



To be read in conjunction with Education Visits or Engagement Events risk assessment

Site Name: Macclesfield Forest (including the River Bollin and Shutlingsloe Hill)

Site details: Macclesfield Forest: used for Primary School visits (this information sheet relates specifically to the wider site locations used during the “River Study” and “Mountain Environment” programmes. For all other programmes and user groups, see separate ‘Macclesfield Forest – Main Site’ Site Information Sheet).

Meeting point: Macclesfield Forest Classroom

NB The Forest Classroom is within the private grounds of the United Utilities Forest Office. As this is a working yard, groups must stay close to the Forest Classroom and be aware of moving vehicles within the wider yard.

Forest Classroom:

Grid ref: SJ 9603 7124.

Nearest Postcode: SK11 0NS

What 3 Words: coach.emeralds.format

Standing Stone Car Park:

Grid Ref: SJ 9777 7148

What 3 Words: polar.renamed.kettles

Mobile phone signal – Poor

(mobile phone reception is patchy and should be considered unreliable within the Forest)

Nearest landlines: Trentabank Ranger Centre; Forest Classroom; United Utilities Forest Office.

Nearest A + E: Macclesfield District General Hospital (Victoria Road, Macclesfield SK10 3BL), 5 miles away

Nearest minor injury unit: as above.

Nearest PDNP office/base: Trentabank Ranger Centre. Tel: 01260 252 832

All PDNP leaders have emergency contact details of PDNPA bases on laminated cards on their rucksack.

General Description of site

Macclesfield Forest is a 1000-acre mixed conifer and deciduous woodland, in hilly terrain, surrounding two large reservoirs. The Forest Classroom is in the heart of the Forest, and provides shelter and toilet facilities. Activities use the network of paths both within and beyond the Forest, including the paths across the surrounding moorland and up to the summit of Shutlingsloe Hill. Most paths are surfaced (e.g. gravel or sand), some paths are steep/uneven, and all areas can be muddy. Rivers activities include walking in the streams, which are usually up to 20-30cm deep.

Car/Coach Parking

Coaches come to the Forest Classroom, and pause while groups disembark briefly to use toilet facilities. Coaches then proceed to the entrance to Standing Stone Car Park where groups are dropped off. Coaches then proceed back down to and wait at the Forest Classroom, where there is ample private parking for coaches and cars, reserved for use by our groups. Detailed instructions on the best route to Macclesfield Forest by coach are sent with your booking information. It is very important to follow these instructions to avoid the coach getting stuck on steep narrow lanes. *(Don't follow the sat nav!)*

Lunchtime Information

In good weather the sessions involve being outside all day and groups will remain outdoors to have a picnic lunch. We will endeavour to provide a sheltered area for lunch but this cannot be guaranteed. Participants are encouraged to bring a plastic bag to sit on while eating their lunch. There are no lunchtime handwashing facilities, so teachers/group leaders may wish to bring their own hand sanitiser. In the event of poor weather, there may be the option of returning to the Forest Classroom to eat lunch, which would be discussed and agreed before the visit. All litter must be taken home as we have no bin collection facilities.

Toilet facilities

Toilets are available in the Forest Classroom (at the start and end of the day only), including an accessible toilet. If needed, additional public toilets are available at Trentabank Ranger Centre, including an accessible toilet (accessible by Radar key). There will be no toilet facilities available during the middle of the day.

Distance/timing between important site locations

Trentabank Car Park to Standing Stone Car Park: 1.8km (1.1 miles) uphill, by coach.

Rivers Programme: Standing Stone Car Park to Trentabank Ranger Station: Walk of 2.5km, mostly downhill, along dirt- and gravel-tracks, some of which are steep/uneven and may be muddy.

Mountains Programme: Standing Stone Car Park to Trentabank Ranger Station via Shutlingsloe Hill: 5.2 km walk in total: 2.2km section to the summit (including 125m of ascent), followed by a 3km section (with 250m of decent). Mostly along dirt/gravel- and flagged-paths (some of which are steep/uneven), but with some muddy sections across the moorland. Includes stiles and gates. Not accessible for wheelchair users. The final ascent to the summit involves climbing up some tall stone steps.

Both Programmes



Forest Classroom
Parking area for coaches here



A typical path in the Forest

Rivers Programme



The source of the stream



The larger stream site

Mountains Programme



Steep stile on approach to
Shutlingloe summit



Steep steps on approach to
Shutlingloe summit

Specific Advice / Information

PDNP leaders are provided with and must wear PPE including: Waterproof clothing (when appropriate); Walking boots/shoes.

School groups are advised (when booking) to bring warm and waterproof clothing, and outdoor footwear for their visit. Wellingtons are advisable for the Rivers session. We advise wearing long trousers (rather than skirts or shorts) due to long grass and brambles/nettles on site.

In the summer months, there may be midges; staff and participants may wish to apply insect repellent before visiting.

Site Information written by & date: Frances Arnott 19/1/21

Reviewed by and date: Frances Arnott 12/2/22