



## Safe Guide and the World Centres

Each year many Girl Guides of Canada-Guides du Canada groups travel to the World Centres: Our Cabana (Mexico), Our Chalet (Switzerland), Pax Lodge (England); Sangam (India).

Each group, whether it's an independent group trip or a nationally or provincially sponsored trip, needs to ensure that the Safe Guide procedures are followed.

If you are planning a trip to one of the World Centres, please be sure to check out the additional information provided below. This information is provided to expand on the program information you received from the World Centres. Check the program information carefully at each World Center as some are restricted to specific age groups.

Note that before you begin to fund raise for your trip, you must obtain permission **before** starting any fund raising activities. The fundraising governance policy 01-19-01 and accompanying Procedures and Guidelines must be followed.

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### OUR CABANA

Mexico

Please note that you must not swim in the pool at Our Cabana unless there is a lifeguard supervising the pool.

Some of the Our Cabana sessions include an out trip to Acapulco to participate in scuba diving, snorkeling and kayaking. Scuba diving is only permitted in pools. Open water scuba diving is not permitted. In order to participate in these other activities at Our Cabana, you will need to complete swimming and/or boating tests before your trip.

If you are arranging your own trip to Mexico and plan water activities independent from what is offered by Our Cabana, you must follow the Safe Guide planner and complete the Water Activity Plan (WA.1)

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### PAX LODGE

London, England

This World Centre shares their grounds with the World Bureau of WAGGGS. The Centre is located 20 minutes from the tourist areas and has 59 beds, with a live in staff of 14.

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### OUR CHALET

Adelboden, Switzerland

Our Chalet is located near Adelboden, Switzerland. Adelboden and its surrounds provide a wonderful array of activities, including swimming in the local pool, horseback riding,



high altitude hikes, adventure activities such as whitewater rafting, canyoning, rappelling (Our Chalet uses the British term abseiling) and zip lining.

Note that GGC does not permit some of the activities offered to tourists in the Adelboden area. These are uninsured activities. If you are booking an independent tour, please review the list of Uninsured Activities in Safe Guide.

Below is some information about activities you may be considering during your stay.

### **Day Excursions**

All groups participating in off-site programs must be accompanied by a GGC adult Member as per our supervision ratios.

### **Outdoor Pool (Adelboden)**

The pool can be used on days where no program activities have been booked. Swiss regulations do not require a lifeguard to be on-site. The person in charge of the pool does have lifeguard qualifications, however, he/she is not always at the poolside. A lifeguard is poolside approximately 75% of the time and is in the area the rest of the time, but not always on the pool deck (i.e., he/she could be cutting the grass nearby, etc.) As a result, Guiders must ensure that the lifeguard is poolside when girls wish to swim. If he/she has to leave, then girls must get out of the pool.

Another option is for groups to bring their own lifesaver/lifeguard as per *Safe Guide*. Girls must complete a swim test in Canada prior to leaving for Switzerland, or you will need to ask the lifeguard to conduct a swim test.

### **Glacier Lake Dip**

This activity is sometimes included as part of an excursion. Note that you will need to ensure that there is a lifeguard present and that all participants have completed the swim test before leaving Canada.

### **Hiking around Our Chalet**

Hiking around Our Chalet can be done at various levels of exertion. Walking up a mountain can be exhausting depending on your level of fitness and whether you are used to the high altitude. Getting used to the altitude, the climate and the effort involved in walking on the mountain is as important as having the right equipment. Therefore, start off with a low level hike early in the session and then do the “harder ones” as the session moves on and you have become more accustomed to the altitude.

Though it may take some time, with a good pair of boots, common sense, and by following the route signs, participants should be successful in reaching their destination. Bring a bottle of water and snacks to keep up energy levels.

Hikes in Switzerland are rated for difficulty. Low numbers like one or two level hikes are easier than high number six or seven hikes. Lower hikes are fairly easy, without too much altitude gain and are usually not long. However, the time it takes to complete a hike depends on the fitness of individuals and group size. Any level between one and six can be done without too much previous hiking experience in a mountain environment.

Level seven and above are hikes that require a higher fitness level, as they are steeper and altitude becomes more of a factor. They might include very narrow pathways and



will demand more willpower to finish. These hikes are for the hikers with experience in mountain travel. Others should not attempt them.

### **Overnight Hike**

An overnight hike to the cheesemaker's hut is one of the opportunities for guests at Our Chalet. It is a level seven hike and starts in the evening. As this is a somewhat challenging hike, it is recommended for those who are fit and have experience hiking. This hike requires an assessment of participants' fitness level. This is usually done through completion of a lower level hike (minimum level three).

If the overnight hike proceeds according to schedule, participants arrive at the overnight stop before dark. They then get up very early the next morning and set out before sunrise to walk the last part of the hike. Although the sun is not yet up, it will be dawn, so girls will not hike in complete darkness. A flashlight should be used if and when it is needed.

### **Horseback riding**

You must ensure that participants participate in this activity based on their skill, confidence and experience. The following is a guideline for determining at what skill level your group can participate:

- Beginners – ride in an enclosed area as part of a lesson
- Intermediate – ride in an enclosed area as part of a lesson/group. They can leave the enclosure for an easy trek with a guide. Before leaving the enclosure, all participants must be able to demonstrate that they can control the horse (stop, start, steer) and have confidence in their balancing.
- Advanced – The participants have previous experience and can competently control the horse. They can go on a trek with a guide.

All participants are required to wear a helmet and must provide a signed Release, Wavier and Assumption of Risk (SG.5)

### **Adventure Activities**

A wide range of adventure activities are available in Switzerland. Some of them include:

#### Scooter Rides

- Participants are given a helmet and a gravity-propelled scooter with handlebars and front/back brakes. They walk to the top of an 8 km trail and check in with the activity facilitator(s).
- Participants then push off and start going down the path. They must use the brakes to control their speed.
- There is an activity facilitator at the bottom of the path as well, to collect the equipment. There is no staff on the actual path (just the top and bottom). A patrol goes out at the end of the day to check the entire path.
- Guiders must accompany the girls on the path and ensure that the group stays together.
- There is a risk of falling off. Injuries have included: cuts, bruises, scrapes, sprains, and strains. Injuries mostly happen at bends in the path, where participants tend to fall off if going too fast at that point. Two in 10 participants fall off.
- Activity facilitators have radiophones.

#### Rock Climbing / Abseiling:

- You must use the same company that Our Chalet uses for this activity.
- All participants must wear a helmet and full safety gear is provided.



- Participants should be aware that the least experienced participant determines the level of the activity. All participants are required to provide a signed Release, Wavier and Assumption of Risk (SG.5)

Mountain Biking:

- Choose the level of the ride based on the fitness and endurance of the participants in the group.

NOTE that paragliding is uninsured and not permitted.

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**SANGAM**

Trips to Sangam are exciting and rewarding. It's important to prepare for an adjustment to both the culture and climate. Because of the significant differences between Canada and India, we recommend that trips to Sangam are only made by girls in their last year of Rangers or adults.