



HopScotch Holiday Guide 2024





We are excited to offer a full respite break programme in 2024.

The enclosed guide gives you all the necessary information to maximise the experience and have a great holiday. Although we ask you to read all the information in the guide carefully, you must know your responsibilities over the week.

It is a simple 3 Ps.

1. Prepare

Select the young people carefully and prepare them for the break beforehand to know what to expect. Then, please complete the required paperwork and return it to us at least four weeks before your holiday.

2. Plan

We want you to get the best from your holiday, so we ask you to select two activities in advance.

While we hope it all goes to plan, you need to prepare for the unexpected, so have a contingency plan in place just in case a child needs to return home for whatever reason.

3. Play

At least three staff members must accompany the young people on all-day trips - the evenings are your responsibility, so be prepared for a busy week!

Bedtimes, catering, and discipline are all within your control, so agree to your preferred rules and stick to them!!

Lastly, enjoy your holiday; we know it will be hugely rewarding for everyone.



THE CHARITY

About HopScotch

HopScotch Children's Charity was set up in 1998 to provide free breaks for vulnerable young people living in Scotland.

PREPARATION

Selecting the Children

HopScotch holidays are for groups of up to 12 children. Sleeping arrangements dictate that the group should consist of six boys and six girls or 12 young people of the same gender. All young people should be between 7 and 12 years old at the time of the holiday, be able to cope with a week away from their usual environment and have no other chance of a holiday this year. Additionally, they should not have been on a HopScotch break before, and young people or close relations of partner organisation staff are not eligible to join.

Children are not eligible for a holiday if they have a recent record of behaviours or other problems, which could place other young people and members of staff at risk.

Work with the young people before the holiday.

We recommend that partner organisations hold at least one meeting with the children and young people before the holiday to prepare them for what to expect.

Please note that HopScotch offers a range of indoor and outdoor activities, which will primarily take place at Ardvullin or the surrounding area. These activities are designed to provide a broad range of experiences for the children visiting us.

Our HopScotch's Activity Leaders will be with you daily, coordinating and delivering activities designed to offer a wide range of experiences for the children visiting us.

Technology

There are no TVs/video/DVD players, or electronic games at Ardvullin. Therefore, young people should avoid bringing computer or electronic games.

Mobile phones brought on the HopScotch break should be handed to a staff member from the partner organization before arrival at Ardvullin. They will be stored in a safe



place at Ardvullin during your stay and only used for essential calls and texts. We want the young people to have a technology-free week.

Paperwork

We require some digital forms to be completed for insurance, health, and safety purposes. Please complete all forms at least four weeks before the holiday. If you do not have all the forms completed within the scheduled time, send in what you have, and the remaining can be forwarded later. Children will not be allowed on holiday unless parental consent is obtained. HopScotch Children's Charity holds information about young people, staff, and volunteers at their office and maintains confidentiality concerning this information. However, if a child is at risk, we must disclose information to the relevant authority, in line with our child protection procedures. Insurance: We have public liability insurance for the Respite Centre with Tower Gate Insurance UK Ltd. QBE provides our minibus insurance. Partner organizations must ensure they carry adequate insurance for young people while in their care. Copies of both insurance documents are available on request.

Backup Plan

We recommend having a backup plan if a child or young person must return home due to family situations/behavioural issues/homesickness. The backup plan could be a member of staff on standby at home who could collect someone if needed. Alternatively, one of your staff members could take a vehicle to Ardvullin for the break, and they could bring any child/young people home if necessary.

Severe Weather

In the event of severe weather, like high winds or snow, we may have to delay the start of your break or return you home early. We have battery-operated lights, alternative heating, and cooking facilities in case of a power cut.

Pre-Visits

We recommend visiting Ardvullin before the holiday if you have not been on a HopScotch break before. To organise a visit, please call us on 0131 336 5554/07771762071 to schedule a suitable time.



The Visiting Carer's role

You are responsible for the well-being and enjoyment of young people at all times. Your average day at HopScotch will include activity sessions and continuous care of the children. HopScotch's Activity Leader will liaise with you to plan each day's activities.

During your chosen HopScotch activities, you may have to participate and assist in the various parts of the programme that require your help.

You will spend most of your day assisting in one (or more) activities, ensuring the young people happily enjoy what they are doing. You will likely participate in many activities, so while you do not need to be an expert, a have-a-go attitude is essential.

Also, you will have to fill the gaps between activity sessions and meals with fun games and activities and ensure the welfare of the children.

This includes: -

- supervising and entertaining young people when travelling in the minibus by, for example, playing games such as 'I Spy' or singing group songs.
- always supervise young people in the house, play area and grounds.
- ensuring young people are appropriately dressed for the weather and daily activities.
- organising a programme of evening activities. We can provide you with prepared Scavenger Hunts, Treasure Trails and arts and crafts materials.
- ensuring quiet and calm once young people are in bed.

As well as supervising children, other daily responsibilities include preparing all meals and keeping the house clean and tidy. The house is clean and ready for you on arrival, and we ask that you leave it in a similar condition when you leave.

For health and safety reasons, we would also like you to keep the house clean and tidy on a day-to-day basis, paying attention to: -

- hanging waterproofs up to dry/drying wellies
- bringing play equipment/ toys into the house at night
- mopping up after showers
- Encourage respect for property, equipment, and facilities and report breakages and any property damage to the Activity Leader as soon as possible.



THE CENTRE

Ardvullin, HopScotch's Holiday Centre

Ardvullin is situated in Ardgour on the Ardnamurchan Peninsula and is reached by crossing the Corran ferry just north of Ballachulish, 8 miles south of Fort William. It is located on 5 acres of private grounds and overlooks Loch Linnhe.

Our purpose-built Activity Centre is situated within the Ardvullin grounds, and it offers a variety of indoor activities such as climbing, yoga, sports, and games. We will allocate at least one day to utilize the facility, minimizing the travel time to off-site activities and limiting our carbon footprint.

Our adventure playground features a 30-metre aerial runway (flying fox), a clatter bridge, a tyre traverse ladder, a scramble net, and a gravity bowl and rota bounce! However, it is always important to supervise children when playing in the playground. For safety reasons, only one child should use the flying fox. Similarly, only one person is allowed on the trampoline, and the net must be closed. Furthermore, no flips are permitted on the trampoline to minimize the risk of injury.

We have made every effort to ensure that Ardvullin is as welcoming as possible. The rooms are spacious and well-lit, and we offer separate bunk rooms for girls and boys and bedrooms for male and female staff members. Every bed has a duvet, pillow, sheet, mattress protector, and bed linen. Our guests can also access separate male and female shower rooms; one of our staff bedrooms has en-suite facilities. Additionally, our utility room is equipped with laundry facilities. We have a large and fully equipped kitchen with everything you need for self-catering, including an electric cooker, AGA cooker, microwave, fridge/freezer, dishwasher, pots, pans, crockery, cutlery, utensils, and baking equipment.

Upon your arrival at Ardvullin, the property will be clean and tidy. Please leave it in the same condition and strip all beds before departure. It's important to note that we may charge you additional fees from your deposit if our housekeeper is required to work overtime. Cleaning equipment and materials are provided for your convenience.

Please sort out your recycling waste and ensure all the bottles/cartons/cans are washed and put in the correct bins on the left side of the house.

Please do not flush wipes, sanitary wear, and cotton wool pads down the toilet. We have a septic tank at Ardvullin. These items can easily block these items, resulting in



unpleasantness and inconvenience for other groups and costing the charity unnecessary costs to unblock the septic tank.

THE HOLIDAY

Luggage

Luggage space is limited on the bus so everyone must have one average-sized sports bag. Food should be packed in cardboard boxes or carrier bags and transferred to the crates on the bus. We have provided useful checklists for you and the young people. Also, please let us know in advance if you would like cool boxes for storing the food on the journey.

The Journey

Our bus driver will pick you up from the specified location and drive you to Ardvullin. The normal pick-up time is 11 am on Monday. Please ensure all luggage and food is ready for loading, and the young people have all been to the toilet.

We need to tell you about some rules for travelling in the minibus. Please make sure everyone is aware of them:

- Everyone (including adults) must always wear seatbelts whilst the engine is running. In the event of an emergency or travel sickness during the journey, please notify the driver and they will stop at the next safe point.
- Heads, arms etc. must be kept away from the windows
- The driver must not be distracted during the journey.
- Rubbish must not be thrown out of the window.
- The driver must not be left in charge of the young people during stops.

Food, apart from boiled sweets, should not be eaten during transit. There will be at least two stops on the journey – one for lunch and, depending on the distance you must travel, one other break. So everyone should take a packed lunch and drink. The journey time will depend on the distance to Ardvullin and the weather and traffic conditions. There is a ferry crossing towards the end of the journey, at Corran, 8 miles south of Fort William. The crossing takes 5 minutes, and the ferry runs every half an hour.



Arrival

On arrival at Ardvullin our Activity Leader will show you around the house and grounds, go through the house rules, unload the minibus, and try to answer any queries you may have. They will discuss your activities for the week, and it is an opportunity for you to discuss any relevant issues regarding the children. As you normally arrive late on Monday afternoon you will not go out in the minibus again until Tuesday morning. You will normally go for a walk after dinner on Monday. The walk is a good chance for everyone to stretch their legs after the journey and get acquainted with the local area.

We provide each child with a pair of wellies, waterproofs, and a backpack to use during the holiday. They will also receive a scrapbook and hat to keep. We also supply wet suits and beach shoes for visits to the beach.

Daily Activities

Now that we have our new Activity Centre, we can offer a wide range of onsite activities. Due to this and to be more environmentally responsible, we will limit the amount of travel during your HopScotch break. Therefore, we ask that you choose two off-site activities, and we will organise these for you along with some centre-based and local beach visits and walks. Please select your two preferred activities on the Holiday Activities Form and return it to us at least four weeks before the holiday.

Off site activities

- Canoeing – at Glencoe Outdoor Centre in loch Linnhe led by an experienced instructor (journey time – 30 mins) – **Please note the centre requires 4 weeks' notice to book and is subject to instructors' availability.**
- Horse-riding – children & Young people can enjoy being escorted on lead rein pony rides at Achnalarig Farm in Oban. (Journey time – one hour).
- Ardgour Alpaca and Boer Goat Experience – meet alpacas, brush and walk the Shetland ponies and meet, play with Boer Goats. (journey time – 5 mins)
- Gondola (cable car) to the top of Aonach Mor, next to Ben Nevis and a walk to the viewpoint (journey time – 40 mins).
- Segway. A magic carpet experience, balancing on a platform. Exploring the Highland Estate. This activity is run by Woodlands based in Ballachulish (journey time - 20 mins). Not suitable for children under 9.
- Tubing – slide down the hill side on an inflatable ring whilst enjoying the beautiful setting of Glencoe Ski Centre available from April 2024 (journey time – 40 mins).



On site activities

Now that we have our fantastic new activity centre, we can offer a selection of on-site activities including:

- Indoor climbing/scrambling on our new mixed ability climbing. This is a supervised activity and must be monitored by HopScotch or partner organisation staff. The climbing wall will be closed when not in use. We provide climbing shoes.
- Yoga facilitated by a yoga instructor.
- Volleyball, badminton, basketball, and indoor football equipment.
- Games facilitated by HopScotch staff and volunteers.
- Bushcraft activity.
- Biking – using ramps and other specialist equipment.
- Team Challenges

Local attractions

- Visit Sallachan beach, a beautiful beach just a 5 minutes' drive from Ardvullin.
- Visit Ardtoe beach, a beautiful, sheltered bay about an hour's drive from Ardvullin. (journey time – 1.4 hours)
- Ariundle Forest Walk – down by the river and through the woods this is a great walk for spotting frogs and plants. (journey time – 30 minutes)
- Inchree. A short walk to view spectacular waterfalls. (journey time – 5 minutes' drive from ferry exit)
- Castle Toiram. The lovely sandy beach beneath a Castle – it's a great place to play rounders or fly a kite. (journey time – one hour)

On the days you have off site activities, you will typically leave Ardvullin at 9.45 am each morning. It would be best if you took wellies, waterproofs, and backpacks every day. The sun can be very powerful during the summer, especially at the beach, so we have supplies of sunscreen, and we ask that partner organisation staff ensure young people use the cream. Buoyancy aids are provided and must be used during visits to the beach. We also supply wetsuits.



A minimum of three partner organisation staff (to 12 children) must accompany the young people on day trips, and the lead member of staff (carer) must participate in all the activities. HopScotch Activity Leader is responsible for coordinating and guiding you on daily activities. However, they are not responsible for looking after the young people and should not be left in sole charge of them at any time.

HopScotch supplies midge nets, wristbands and repellent and we have a Midge machine in the grounds of Ardvullin.

Evenings

Organising the evening activities is your responsibility. The young people are usually happy to play on the adventure playground or have a football game, and you will have use of the activity centre. However, the children must always be supervised, whether in the activity centre or outside. Some groups of young people will require a more structured programme, and we can supply you with scavenger hunts, treasures trails or arts and craft material and indoor games.

Bedtime

When young people go to bed, it is up to you and will depend on the age of the children. However, we recommend that staff set a fixed bedtime of around 9.30 pm with lights out at 10 pm to avoid overtiredness and distress for everyone the next day. It is good to set this before the holiday, so the young people know what to expect.

Catering

HopScotch breaks are self-catering. We leave the cooking arrangements to you, but this is what usually works best:

- Breakfast at around 8.30 am – cereal, toast.
- Packed lunch (you will not normally come back to Ardvullin for lunch) – sandwiches, fruit, and something to drink. Cool bag/rucksacks are provided for each member of your group. Cool boxes and flasks are also available.
- Evening meal at around 6.30 pm. Our advice is to keep it simple - pasta, pizza, curry.
- Supper before bed – hot chocolate and toast.
- Please ensure you take enough drinks for the journeys and on day trips to ensure the young people stay hydrated.



We recommend you buy enough food for the entire week and essentials topped up during one of your day trips. If you are shopping, two staff members must be left with the young people and please avoid long shopping trips.

Some groups encourage young people to help prepare packed lunches and evening meals. For example, we have a BBQ, and we will be happy to help set it up for you, but as part of HopScotch's Health and Safety Regulations HopScotch staff cannot help to cook the food.

Morrisons supermarket deliver directly to Ardvullin - <https://groceries.store.morrisons.com/> If you use the delivery service, please choose a delivery time after your arrival on the Monday.

The Ardgour Brewery is offering delicious homemade burgers and chips delivered directly to Ardvullin. The prices are as follows:

4oz Beef burger - £4.00

6oz Beef burger - £6.00

To add cheese - £0.75

Chips (vegan) - £2.50 (large portion)

Spicy bean burger (veggie but can be vegan on request) - £6.00

Veggie (pea protein) burger (can be vegan on request) - £6.00

Venison burger - £7.20

Orders can be placed on Monday for delivery on Wednesday, or Thursday nights.

Pocket Money

We recommend that children do not bring any pocket money during the HopScotch break. This guideline ensures fairness among all children and prevents them from spending their limited funds on sweets and drinks. Also, there aren't many shops available when we are out and about, so leaving any spare money at home is more manageable.

Behaviour

We hope this break will be an excellent adventure for the young people. It will be their first holiday away from home for many, and naturally, they will be very excited. However, discipline is your responsibility, and we suggest you set ground rules before the holiday, discuss them with the young people and stick to them. HopScotch enjoys



a good reputation both locally and throughout Scotland. So please ensure that the young people maintain the highest standards of behaviour during the holiday, both at Ardvullin and on day trips.

Going Home

You will typically be leaving for home at about 9.15 am on Friday. We ask that the beds are stripped (except for the mattress protectors unless they are dirty) and that all the rooms are left clean and tidy, ready for the next group of children. Everyone should check they have ALL their belongings with them. We ask that you empty the fridge for health and safety purposes and discard any opened food. If you wish to leave unopened food in the kitchen, we will donate it to a local food bank. Our bus driver will return you to the collection point, and there will be at least one stop on the way home, including a break for lunch if required.

We usually try and get you home between 1-2 pm on Fridays, but please check with our Activity Leader before confirming a time with parents.

HEALTH & SAFETY

HopScotch's Policy

Promoting and maintaining the Health and Safety of children, staff and volunteers remain a primary consideration for HopScotch Children's Charity. However, we recognise that as the partner organisation, you hold the primary care and responsibility for children, and we would hope that their health and safety regulations would complement ours. HopScotch has a Health & Safety policy that includes Risk Assessments for the house, grounds, minibus, and all activities. Copies of all the Risk Assessments are enclosed with this pack, along with a copy of HopScotch Children's Charity Child Protection document.

Safety and Fire Precautions

HopScotch Children's Charity is fully responsible for ensuring appropriate health and safety fire regulations operate at Ardvullin. We will ensure that the fire and other safety rules are explained to all partner organisations at the beginning of the holiday. All adults must be thoroughly familiar with fire exits and appliances, evacuation drills and all other emergency procedures. We will organise a Fire Practice for all adults and young people on the first day you arrive and record that it took place, any problems and action taken to alleviate the issues. The house must be kept tidy, and the entrance



to Ardvullin and all corridors and access areas must always be clear of obstructions to comply with fire regulations.

Medical services

HopScotch has established contact with a local GP who provides a GP service to the residents of Ardvullin. Phone numbers, directions to the GP and the nearest Accident and Emergency Department will be displayed in the Reception Hall at Ardvullin. Any child who asks to see a doctor must be allowed.

Storage and Administration of Medicines

All drugs, including medicines brought with the young people and over-the-counter medications, excluding inhalers, will be stored in the locked laundry room at Ardvullin that is inaccessible to children.

HopScotch staff will hold the key to this cupboard, and one named person from the partner organisation will be responsible for storing and administering drugs and keeping a duplicate key.

First Aid

Our Activity Leader is fully qualified first aider. One member of your staff will also need to have a first aid qualification. HopScotch's minibus has a first aid kit. The Activity Leader and partner organisation staff are responsible for ensuring that these are kept fully stocked and taken with the group. HopScotch Children's Charity will reimburse any expenditure on restocking the minibus first aid kits. Details of any accident, injury or illness must be recorded on an accident form, however minor. Details of time, date, location, witnesses, action taken and by whom and nature of incident should be recorded. This should then be kept in the Accident/Incident book, and a copy should be sent to HopScotch's office either during or immediately after the holiday. Accident/injury and incident forms should be kept with each first aid kit. A complete copy of HopScotch's Health & Safety policy is located at Ardvullin.



Swimming

HopScotch staff should check Parental Consent forms to ensure the parent or guardian consented.

The partner Organisation's responsibility is to ensure a sensible deployment of staff before the activity commences. There must be adults in the water and poolside, sufficient to provide adequate supervision for all young people in all pool areas. One adult must be in the water with the Activity Leader.

Public safety signs and danger warnings must be adhered to.

Smoking

It is the policy of HopScotch Children's Charity that the workplace is smoke-free and that all employees have a right to work in a smoke-free environment. Therefore, smoking is prohibited throughout the entire workplace, with no exceptions. This includes the minibus. This policy applies to all employees, partner organisations, consultants, contractors, and visitors. If you are a smoker, HopScotch staff will show you an area where you can smoke from the sight of the children.

Alcohol

There must be no alcohol present at any time at Ardvullin. In addition, HopScotch and partner staff must not consume alcohol whilst on duty.

Drugs

All non-prescribed, controlled drugs are banned from Ardvullin. Any child found in possession of/and or abusing such substances will be removed from Ardvullin immediately after appropriate arrangements can be made. Any adult found in possession of/and or abusing such substances will be removed from Ardvullin immediately.

Weapons

Any child or adult found to have an offensive weapon must be removed from Ardvullin immediately. This includes firearms (including air pistols), swords, knives, catapults, crossbows, etc.



Young people Absent from the Centre without Permission

Young people may not leave the Centre without permission, which can pose considerable risks for the child. Therefore, it is crucial to act speedily to help protect the child from harm. If this situation does occur, group staff must inform HopScotch staff immediately, and the correct procedures must be followed.

Child Protection

We recognise our responsibilities as a children's charity for preventing, identifying and supporting young people who have been abused. We will cooperate fully with statutory or external agencies to assist with their investigations of disclosures or concerns of abuse. All HopScotch staff and volunteers are Disclosure Scotland checked. A copy of HopScotch's Child Protection Procedures is available on request.

Representation

HopScotch Children's Charity encourages comments on how it could improve its service from users of its services, members of the community, and representatives of other organisations. All such comments will be given serious consideration as to their relevance and viability to HopScotch Children's Charity overall policies. HopScotch Children's Charity encourages direct contact by telephone to discuss views and ideas. However, specific comments should be submitted in writing to enable full consideration by management.

Finally

HopScotch aims to provide the best possible break for children in the safest possible environment. For you, as partner organisation staff, it is hard work and very tiring. Still, it will also be great fun and very rewarding, and a chance for you to develop positive relationships with the young people and provide them with some fantastic lifelong memories.