



Keeping safe at the river

Rivers are great places to explore and have fun, but they can also be dangerous. Please follow these simple guidelines to make sure you stay safe when you visit a river.

- Children should always be with a parent or responsible adult.
- Check the weather forecast before you set off and keep an eye on it while out and about.
- Pick a safe place to visit. Safe areas include:
 - A gravel beach area, which gives you a safe place beside the water to carry out your activities.
 - A riffle - an area of shallow water which is ideal for carrying out any activities in the river.
 - Shallow, sloping river banks so you can get in and out of the water safely.
 - Clear water - you should be able to see your feet when standing in the water. Brown water is a sign that there has been a lot of recent rainfall and you shouldn't enter the river.

Unsafe areas:

- Avoid steep river banks. Don't scramble down steep banks to get to the river as there is a risk of slipping and falling in, and steep banks are difficult to get out of.
- Avoid deep or fast-flowing water. Only go in water that is lower than a pair of children's wellies. As water gets deeper, it appears darker. If you can't see the bottom of the river then it's too deep.
- Avoid cloudy or coloured water. If the water is brown and murky then it is a sign that the river is in flood, or that it is polluted.

Be prepared when visiting a river

- Don't go in the river with bare feet - there may be sharp objects like glass or metal that will cut your feet. Wear wellies, old trainers, or aqua shoes.
- Wear outdoor clothes appropriate for the weather conditions - warm clothing and waterproofs in cold weather and cool breathable clothing and a sunhat in warm weather.
- Take a towel and a spare set of clothes for children, and hand sanitiser to clean your hands after going in the river.

Leave things as you found them:

- It's great fun visiting the river but it's very important to make sure that we don't harm the river and the wildlife which lives there.
- Make sure you take your rubbish away with you, and don't drop litter.
- Don't take any river creatures home - the river is their home and they need to live in the river water to survive.