

Dear Parent/Guardian

We hope this letter will answer all your questions about the Peak Assault competition. Peak Assault is an amazing opportunity to allow young people to safely experience some of the most beautiful and wild upland areas of the UK.

What's happening in 2024?

As previously communicated, we have changed our approach to Peak Assault 2024 and beyond owing to feedback and the significant cost pressures we are encountering which impacts the event being open to all. We want to ensure that we provide events that deliver great skills for life and enable as many young people as possible to have access to new and exciting opportunities.

For Peak Assault 2024 we have devised a great local event closer to home. Operating in Hertfordshire based out of Phasels Wood, the focus of Peak Assault 2024 will be to engage more young people to become familiar with the Peak Assault format, in easier surroundings. It will enable teams of young people to learn and put their navigation skills into practice, be supported as needed and develop their orienteering and walking skills in a more forgiving environment.

We anticipate delivering a remote event, in future years.

Arrival at Phasels Wood on Friday 11th Oct will be scheduled for after 9pm.

The event is anticipated to end approx. 12.30pm on Sun 13th Oct.

More detailed confirmation of timings will be communicated nearer the event.

For 2024, we will maintain the usual structure of Peak Assault with some adjustments. The information below relates to our usual event in the mountains, this is to give you a full idea of what to expect.

What is Peak Assault?

Peak Assault is a navigation competition for teams of young people in an upland area of the UK. The location is usually kept a secret, in the past we have visited many upland areas including: The Peak District, The Lake District, North Wales, Dartmoor, Exmoor and the Brecon Beacons.

The competition takes place over a weekend and teams must navigate to check points around the course to collect as many points as possible throughout Saturday and then again on Sunday morning. Peak Assault is organised by Hertfordshire Scouts and run by a dedicated team of volunteers. It has been taking place almost every year since 1968 and attracts more than 250 young people in over 30 teams.

Why is the location traditionally kept secret?

The main reasons for keeping the destination secret are to add an 'element of surprise' and to ensure nobody gains an unfair advantage by studying maps of the area before the competition.

What clothing and kit will they need to take?

The weather conditions in October can be extremely demanding. We know from experience that it can be bright sunshine on minute, then change rapidly into winter conditions of snow, ice and rain. It is essential that they have the proper clothing and kit as they could be out walking in poor weather for a long period of time and will need clothing that keeps them warm and dry.

A full list of personal kit can be found on our website (www.hertfordshirescouts.org.uk/upcoming-events/peak-assault/). You do not need to spend a fortune on kit, but it must meet the competitions minimum standards. If equipment is missing or does not meet the minimum standard, then we will not let the young people go out on to the hills and they would be unable to take part in the competition.

When shopping for items on the kit list, be careful that you are not paying 'over the top' for high profile brands, when the same piece of equipment can be bought for a fraction of the price without the name. Speak with your Explorer Scout Leaders as they may have some equipment that can be loaned out and will know where you can buy good value clothing and kit. If you have any questions about the suitability of kit you are thinking of buying, you can get advice by emailing: hpakit@hertfordshirescouts.org.uk

What happens over the weekend?

Teams board coaches on Friday night at several locations across Hertfordshire. Your Explorer Leaders will let you know where they will depart from. The coaches will leave promptly at 6:30pm and will not wait for late arrivals. The coaches will stop at a service station on the way, so it's worth them having a small amount of money to buy some food. The coaches will arrive at the Base Camp where all the teams and their supporters set up camp and get a good night rest.

What happens on the Saturday?

On Saturday Morning after breakfast, the competition begins, but before the teams head into the hills they must go through a full kit check. Every single item of the team's kit is scrutinised to make sure it meets the competitions minimum standard before the teams are let out on to the hills. Teams then receive a final safety briefing, the competition maps and a list of the check points. They then have a set amount of time (usually 8 hours) to visit as many check points as possible and reach the Overnight Site.

How tough is the course?

The course covers an upland area that will test their navigation skills and basic fitness. It does not include any terrain requiring rock climbing or mountaineering. In advance of the competition, the organising team spend the week familiarising themselves with the detail of the whole area, checking the safety of the course, identifying and marking no-go areas and placing the check points. There is a lower level course option will be held on the foot hills and forests surrounding the main course. This allows for easier terrain and navigation.

So, after the start nobody sees them until they reach the finish?

No. During the competition weekend, marshals equipped with radios and safety equipment patrol an area of the course around each of the check points to make sure the teams are safe and do not break any rules. Teams will be asked their destination, and this is noted together with the time the team is seen. The marshals are in constant contact with the competition organiser via radio. This means that we can find any team, at any time. If any team encounters a problem, the marshals are supported by Peak Assault's own Field Response team who are able to rapidly assist any team anywhere on the course.

We spend many months carefully preparing for every competition and we have policies and plans in place to cover how we respond to emergencies and evacuations. These plans have been developed with safety advice from hill walking experts and our experience from previous competitions. If you would like to see these plans you can contact the Peak Assault registrar by emailing: hpa@hertfordshirescouts.org.uk

What happens at the Overnight Site?

On Saturday evening teams will stay at an overnight site. This is normally a bit more basic than the base camp but water and toilet facilities are provided. It is staffed by a dedicated team who check the condition of teams as they arrive and are available to assist with anyone who has problems. Teams set up the tents they have carried with them, prepare their evening meal and try to get a good nights' rest before the second leg of the competition on Sunday.

Is Sunday's competition the same as Saturday?

Yes, in format it is the same, but is of shorter duration and ends back at Base Camp just after lunch where teams are met by their Supporters who provide them with a hot meal. When all the teams are

safely off the hills, the trophies are presented to the winning teams before everybody boards the coaches to return to Hertfordshire.

Can I find out where they are during the weekend?

Once the competition is underway, we normally publish its location on our website: (<https://www.hertfordshirescouts.org.uk/upcoming-events/peak-assault/>). We also normally provide updates on social media such as Facebook and twitter.

What time will they be home on the Sunday?

As the location of the competition is different every year we cannot give you a definitive return time. Instead, the young people are encouraged to call home when they stop at the services on the journey home, to let you know what time they will arrive back in Hertfordshire. **Please do not** call the departure points as they will not know when the coaches are due back.

Sounds great!

Yes it is! We know that everyone who takes part in Peak Assault gets a huge amount from the experience and has an amazing time. Please encourage your young people to take part as it will be one of the most memorable parts of their Scouting journey.

If you have any further question or queries about Peak Assault, please speak to your Explorer Scout Leader, who will be able to answer them or find out the answer from the organisers.