

Leysin Guides Bureau

International Schools Programme

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High Quality Outdoor Learning Programme for Schools

The value of incorporating outdoor activities into the school curriculum has long been recognised by educationalists. Studies have proved that adding outdoor learning time has positive effects on both students and teachers. Researchers report that children who were exposed to outdoor education had improvements in concentration, behaviour, and learning, while teachers experienced better health, wellbeing, and job satisfaction.

Other benefits for the teacher are having quality time with their students on an equal standing and being able to share the enjoyment that our activities offer. Time together with students outside the classroom often cultivates a better understanding and relationship as the teacher can see the students operating in a new environment. Conversely students also see the teacher in a new light away from the authoritarian classroom role, enhancing mutual respect.

Outdoor activities complement and reinforce academic learning. They demonstrate that the classroom is not the only place to learn and show the relevance of academic learning within the real world. In the outdoors students learn how to manage risk, cope with stress, increase resilience, enhance creative thinking and gain confidence, enabling them to cope in an ever-changing world. Learning in the outdoors also encourages a respect and understanding of nature, which is relevant to students' understanding of the impact of climate change and the effect it will have in their future.

Our instructional activities can be integrated into the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award. Taking this award can be quite daunting but starting with one of our activity sessions can give students confidence and encouragement to commit to it. For students who have already started the Award, our activities can help develop their skill levels and prepare them for the next level.

We would like to offer your students a challenging and learning experience outside the classroom so that you can all enjoy the benefits. We welcome collaboration with teachers to enable us to develop a programme best suited to your pupils needs.

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Our Credentials

The Leysin Guides' Bureau has more than 30 years' experience working with youth groups, including Jeunesse et Sport programmes in Swiss State Schools, and with international schools. We are certified international mountain guides and international hiking guides. High safety standards are our priority and all our activities are thoroughly risk assessed. Importantly all our staff are fully vetted and qualified to work with young people, which includes child protection and "safeguarding" training. All our staff have a current police record check and professional insurance.

Our Location

Leysin is an ideal location to run activities all year round due to the variety of terrain and good infrastructure. In summer there is easy access to hiking trails, climbing areas and via ferrata, as well as great sport facilities situated in the village. In winter the ski resort offers pistes suitable for all levels, as well as off-piste skiing and many snowshoe trails. Leysin also offers a beautiful environment. Sitting at 1300 m altitude and with a southerly aspect, it benefits from lots of sunshine and panoramic views of the surrounding mountains. Leysin is easily accessible from the Lake Geneva region with many options for group accommodation. Located in the heart of the Alpes Vaudoise we have the opportunity to explore many other local venues, and we are close to the higher mountains for the more ambitious expeditions that we offer.

Our Aims

We aim to provide students with an experience that is challenging, rewarding and beneficial to their development. We believe in the importance of adding an educational element of training into our activities to link to, and complement, their classroom experience. To ensure that students get the best benefit from our activities we establish an active dialogue to explain the aims and objectives for each activity and at the end of the activity promote discussion to reinforce the key learning points. We also aim to have a lot of fun!

The Benefits

High-quality outdoor learning experiences are proven to:

1. Develop self-awareness, enhance confidence and self-esteem.
2. Health benefits, both physically and mentally
3. Develop social and emotional awareness.
4. Environmental awareness. Respect and enjoyment for nature.
5. Activity skills (e.g. learning how to navigate or rock climb).
6. Personal qualities: developing initiative, self reliance, responsibility, perseverance, tenacity resilience, adaptability and commitment.
7. Skills for life; collaborative-working and communication skills, leadership skills,
8. Increased motivation, appetite for learning and broaden horizons.
9. Provides a "breathing space" away from home, school and peer pressures.
10. Gives perspective to their academic studies such as seeing flora, fauna, geology, physics, communication skills.
11. Self-respect and respect for others.
12. Enhances risk management skills. Allows children to become more able to identify hazards and risks.
13. Develop reflective and inquisitive thinking along with problem-solving approaches in 'real' situations, sometimes in adverse conditions.
14. Encourage a holistic development of children.



Our Activities

Spring / Summer / Autumn

1. Low Elements

Duration: half day

Suitable Age: students of all ages

Description: Low Elements is a collection of fun and challenging team activities that are done at, or near ground level. They do not rely on physical strength, so are accessible to a wide range of participants. Each activity has a different focus and requires that the group work together in a variety of ways. Favourite activities include the Blind Polygon, Spider's Web, and Balance Beam, and there are many more.

Key Benefits: students will stretch their creative thinking, planning, communication and collaboration skills, as well as practicing open-mindedness, patience and trust in each other.

Venues: Leysin, Les Diablerets, Champéry.

2. High Elements

Duration: half day

Suitable Age: students of all ages

Description: High Elements is a collection of activities held high in the trees. Participants use harnesses, helmets, and ropes to balance across beams, cross cable bridges and climb over obstacles. The activities can be done by individuals, pairs, or trios, with the remainder of the group taking on a safety role and offering support. While the setting of the High Elements gives the perception of high risk, the actual risk is low due to the use of safety equipment and supervision. Our guides will help equip participants and monitor each activity until completion.

Key benefits: students challenge their limits, manage their fears and develop self-confidence. Through communication and collaboration they can help each other to achieve or exceed their goals.

Venues: Leysin, Les Diablerets, Champéry.

3. Mountain Hikes

Duration: half or full day

Suitable Age: students of all ages

Description: The aim is to make a journey allowing the students to interact positively with each other and appreciate the mountain environment. Our mountain walks can be physically challenging for the students but with an achievable objective.

Preparation and learning to navigate are of key importance; as is being correctly equipped, taking ownership of the adventure and proceeding at a suitable pace. During the walk we can integrate field work with the school curriculum on topics such as geology, flora, fauna, and the mountain way of life.

Key Benefits: Organisational skills, teamwork, the reward of the summit or journey, developing physical and mental well-being, linking outdoor experience to classroom themes. Helping the students understand their level of fitness.

Venues: Forest and alpine meadows around Veyges, La Crevasse, Prafandaz, Solacyre, and Les Fers. And the local summits of La Riondaz, Berneuse, Tour d'Al, Mayen, and Famelon.

4. Orienteering

Duration: half day

Suitable Age: students of all ages

Description: Orienteering is the fun way to learn how to navigate using a map and compass. It involves finding check points shown on a map as quickly as possible.

Students will work independently or in small groups, which gives them a high degree of participation and independence. The orienteering courses can be adapted depending on the ability of the student, with an easy level for beginners to more complex courses which require a strategy.

Key Benefits: learning navigation skills working independently or in small teams, organisation skills, and strategy. Orienteering is perfect for improving fitness and encouraging healthy competitiveness.

Venues: Leysin village and adjacent fields and forest.



Our Activities

5. Rock Climbing

Duration : half or full day

Suitable Age : students of all ages

Description : Rock climbing involves students ascending a rock face equipped with harness and rope and then being lowered to the ground. Learning the correct ropework and how to belay each other is an essential part of the activity. This is an activity where there is risk, so our guides will help equip students, give safety instructions and monitor the activity throughout.

Key Benefits : for the individual to challenge limiting beliefs, set personal goals, and develop resourcefulness, determination and confidence. For the group, to develop communication skills, collaboration, shared responsibility and trust.

Venues : Leysin quarry, Aiguillette des guides, Mayen, Les Plans, Pierre du Moelle, St.Triphon.



Key Benefits : Building confidence to explore new activities and challenges in life. Conquering your fears. Learning how to abseil.

Venues : Leysin quarry, Aiguillette des Guides, St Triphon, Pierre de Moelle.

6. Rappel / Abseil

Duration : half or full day

Suitable Age : 12+ years old

Description : Abseiling (rappelling) is a means of descending steep terrain or rock face safely using a rope. It does require a courageous approach especially for the first time. Students need to overcome their fear of heights (which is normal!) by learning the safe procedures and by trusting the ropes and equipment.

After the initial anxiety of starting the abseil students enjoy their journey down the cliff as it is spectacular. Our guides will ensure a high level of safety, and with good instruction will help the students rationalise the situation so that they will have a rewarding experience.



7. Via ferrata

Duration : half or full day

Suitable Age : 14+ years old

Description : This is an exciting activity, climbing up and across steep rock faces using metal rungs and cables, though with good instruction, using the correct equipment and being roped up, the apparent danger is not real. The via Ferrata on the Tour d'Ai leads to the summit and is a full day activity, with a cable car ride to the summit of the Berneuse, approach walk and descent. The Plan Praz via ferrata is suitable for a half day, in close to proximity to the village. Although not high for the ground, it provides an athletic challenge, and some exciting situations! This activity is best taken after doing an introductory climbing session or a ropes course, as this will give the students a lot more confidence.

Key Benefits : An exciting journey where students will need to overcome their natural fear of exposed situations. They will need to help each other and have good teamwork. A good physical work out too.

Venues : Leysin : Tour d'Ai, Planpraz. In the region : Champéry, Rochers de Naye, Rougemont.



8. Glacier hike

Duration : half or full day

Suitable Age : 12+ years old

Description : Hiking on the glacier Tsanfleuron is a good introduction to the high alpine environment and provides the perfect opportunity to explain glaciology and geology. Seeing the glaciers really highlights the dramatic effects of climate change. We often travel on snowshoes which adds a new skill and makes walking in soft snow possible in winter, spring or early summer. On leaving the marked track we rope up to make glacier travel safe as there can be hidden crevasses or holes in the glacier. Access is from the Glacier 3000 lift system. A hike via the Dome to the refuge l'Espace at the Tour St Martin is a spectacular trip. This can of course be adapted depending on the age and fitness of the group.

Key benefits : learning to deal with the high mountain environment: weather conditions, altitude, fitness, preparation, self-reliance and teamwork. Provides an understanding of glaciology, and geology.

Venues : Glacier 3000, Diablerets.

9. Hut overnight experience

Duration : An overnight stay requiring two days or a minimum of two half days.

Suitable Age : 12+ years old

Description : Staying in a mountain hut is a fantastic experience giving the students the opportunity to spend the night in a remote location. This works well when incorporated with activities going to and from the hut such as a glacier walk, hiking to a local summit, or rock climbing. The students will be staying in a basic but comfortable hut where the hut guardian, if resident, will provide dinner and breakfast. There are dormitories with mattresses duvets and pillows. Hut life is one of communal living and can include students in the cooking and washing up in the huts where there is no resident guardian.

Key Benefits : Enhancing organisational skills, teamwork, social and emotional skills, self-respect and respect for others.

Venues : Prarochet Hut and Diablerets hut which are accessed from Glacier 3000 lift system. Chalet Lacombe situated near Pierre Moelle. The dormitory of Lac Lioson in the region of Col des Mosses.



10. Local alpine summits

Duration : Full day or 2 days with overnight in a mountain hut.

Suitable Age : 14+ years old

Description : The summits of Les Diablerets and Oldenhorn can be climbed as a day outing from the top of the lift at Glacier 3000. Better still is to include an overnight stay in either the Diablerets Hut or the Prarochet hut to make it a real expedition experience.

The summit of Les Diablerets (3210m) offers a real alpine experience as it involves some easy scrambling and a traverse on the glacier using crampons. It is a 4 to 5 hour round trip. The Oldenhorn (3123m) is a steep walk with some exposure. This is a 3 to 4 hour round trip. Both of these summits require a rope for security, and both have fantastic views of most of the Swiss 4000m peaks.

Venues : Les Diablerets, Glacier 3000.

11. High alpine experience

Duration : 2 days or more.

Suitable Age : 14+ years old

Description : This is an exciting opportunity for students to experience the high alpine mountains. They will learn how to travel and climb safely using the appropriate equipment. This activity will involve a high degree of instruction (e.g. how to rope up crossing a glacier, using an ice axe and crampons). We will be based in a mountain hut with the thrill of climbing a suitable alpine summit nearby. The Pigne de la Lé from the Moiry hut or the Wildstrubel from the Lämmeren hut for example, offer a great introduction to Alpinism.

Key Benefits : Learning about and appreciating the beauty of the high mountain environment, and the challenges it can

Our Activities



present. To become self-sufficient, organised, physically fit, and above all embrace the idea of helping anyone having difficulties, i.e. teamwork and companionship. Students will also learn how to safely travel through this terrain.

Venues : Prarochet hut Diablerets, Moiry Hut Grimentz, Orny Hut Champex- Lac. Lämmeren Hut, Leukerbad.

12. Mountain biking

Duration : half, full day or multiday tour

Suitable Age : 14+

Description : Mountain biking is a thrilling activity which has much appeal for young people and a great way to explore the tracks which weave through the Alpage.

Mountain bikes have the advantage that they can be used to explore greater distances especially if multiday expedition is undertaken incorporating an overnight stop.

You no longer need to be a super fit athlete to mountain bike as the advent of e-bikes has made this mode of travel much more accessible.

There are obvious risks, which is why we teach students how to do ride safely and in control. Learning how to use the brakes properly, good body position and reading the terrain are skills that make this a much safer activity. This is

an individual skill, which can stretch the abilities of students from total beginner to those who have much experience. During this group activity students need to be aware of each other and the social side of it can be very rewarding.

Key Benefits : learning to navigate and perfecting new skills, providing a way to access nature, developing an appreciation of the countryside, developing fitness and independence. A chance to explore greater distances and to make a multiday expedition.

Venues : Rough roads and tracks in the Alpage above the villages.



Winter / Spring

These activities can be organised for a half day, full day or multi day depending on the activity and venue. Avalanche awareness and mountain safety are themes that run through all our winter activities.

1. Avalanche awareness

Duration : half or full day

Suitable Age : 14+ years old

Description : Avalanche awareness is especially vital for students involved in winter sports. It can also be integrated with school projects to include snow science, meteorology and the avalanche phenomena.

We demonstrate the causes of avalanches and how to avoid them with in a short theory session which is followed by a practical outdoor session. On the mountain students can learn about local avalanche history, observe avalanche terrain, and man-made defences, They can also make observations on the avalanche hazard and look closely at the properties of snow.

Avalanche awareness is even more relevant when combined



with a day skiing or snowboarding on or off the piste, here we adapt to the ability of the students.

This education can be continued through our off- piste skiing and ski touring activities.

It is important to know how to execute a rescue in the case of being involved in an avalanche accident. We can train students so that they can search for and recover an avalanche victim. This exercise needs good teamwork and provides a very good procedural learning situation.



Key Benefits : Learning about the avalanche hazard and to develop interest in it. Personal safety and risk management in avalanche terrain. Teamwork and interdependence.

Venues : Leysin-Les Mosses, Villars, Glacier 3000.

2. Winter skills, igloo building

Duration : half or full day

Suitable Age : students of all ages

Description : Snow is a great medium to interact with. Here we can look at how to make steps in the snow both up and down, with and without an ice axe. Learning to self-arrest both with and without the axe is also essential safety training before walking or climbing on steeper snow slopes. Sliding in the snow but also learning how to stop in a controlled situation is a fun activity!

We can also teach the students how to build snow shelters and igloos which can be used in an emergency survival situation. Building a snow shelter needs efficient snow shovelling skills as well as with the cutting of and building with snow blocks. It is very rewarding building snow shelters and a great way of learning about the properties of snow too!

Key Benefits : developing new movement skills and safety techniques, risk awareness, collaboration and communication. Learning how to move efficiently in snow and how to build emergency snow shelters.

Venues : Profandaz and Lac Mayen Leysin, Glacier 3000.





3. Snowshoeing

Duration : half or full day

Suitable Age : students of all ages

Description : Snowshoeing is a great way to explore nature in the winter. The snow often allows us to see animal trails that we wouldn't notice in the summer. Our aim is to make an educational journey that can be combined with avalanche awareness, winter skills and snow shelter building.

Key Benefits : Activity skills of snow shoeing, educational content specific to the venue and a beautiful journey into the winter wonderland.

Venues : Riondaz, Truex, Tour de Famelon, Forests and Alpages around Leysin.

4. Skiing on and off piste

Duration : half or full day

Suitable Age : 14+ years old

Description : Skiing off piste within a resort is a great way to give the students a fun time while learning. Ski technique and avalanche awareness are the main learning themes. Managing the avalanche risk and working together as a group promotes teamwork.

We do get some great powder in our region which is relatively untracked.

Key Benefits : Activity skills, teamwork, avalanche education, risk management and fun.

Venues : The ski resorts of Leysin, Les Mosses, Les Diablerets / Villars and Glacier 3000

5. Ski touring

Duration : full day

Suitable Age : 14+ years old

Description : Ski touring is a fantastic way to explore the mountains in the winter. Once the basic skills are learnt we



travel into the back country. The sense of remoteness which we find here shows the students the importance of being self-reliant as an individual and as a group.

Students should be able to ski off piste to benefit from this activity.

Key Benefits : Activity skills on how to use the ski touring equipment, risk management, teamwork. Exploring the incredibly beautiful mountains and alpages in the winter and spring seasons.

Venues : Backcountry in the Alps Vaudoise.

6. Ice Climbing

Duration : half or full day

Suitable Age : 14+ years old

Description : Ice climbing involves students ascending frozen waterfalls with the help of ice axes and crampons. For safety



everyone is fully equipped with harnesses and helmets, and secured by ropes.

Ice climbing technique is really important and we teach the students how to use the specialist equipment, such as ice axes, crampons and ice screws. This is an activity where there is risk, so our guides will help equip students, give safety instructions and monitor the activity throughout.

Key Benefits : developing a new activity skill, challenging personal limits, learning about risk, taking responsibility, building trust. Ice climbing is also physically challenging so great for fitness.

Venues : Cascade Mayen, La Lecherette, La Gouille (Val d'Herens)

Information

Packages

We can provide a customised package for one day or multiple days. Your activity days could be based around accommodation in Leysin or other resorts, or by making use of mountain huts.

Suggested three-day programme for students older than 14 years.

Day 1. Rock climbing half day followed by High Element activities. Stay in Leysin accommodation.

Day 2. Lift to Glacier 3000 and summit walk (Oldenhorn or Diablerets). Stay in Prarochet Hut.

Day 3. Mountain walk to Col de Sanetsch and descent to Gsteig.

Suggested three-day programme for students younger than 14 years old.

Day 1. Orienteering half day followed by High Element activities. Stay in Leysin accommodation.

Day 2. Rock climbing with abseil followed by stay in Chalet Le Combe.

Day 3. Mountain walk on Mont d'Or.

Contact Us

For further information or to discuss creating your bespoke programme, please contact us.

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