

Step for Schools 2025

Friday 5th September 2025
Mapledurham Country Park



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EVENT GUIDE

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WELCOME TO STEP FOR SCHOOLS

Hundreds of us are getting ready for the Vodafone Foundation Step For Schools challenge. I'll be taking on the half-marathon walk, so I'm looking forward to seeing lots of you there, and I hope your training is going well.

Whether you're completing 10km, a half-marathon or full marathon, this guide has everything you need to know – including how to get to Mapledurham Country Park, timings, route maps, food, kit and how to stay safe.

You'll be well looked after throughout, with pit-stops, a BBQ, a bar and a chance to get hands-on with some of Vodafone Foundation's life-changing and life-saving work around the world.

By taking part in Step For Schools, you are becoming part of something bigger, with the power to have real impact by raising funds for Instant Network Schools. All funds will go to Vodafone Foundation's long-term partner UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, so that more refugee children and young people can access a quality digital education.

The best part? Vodafone Foundation will match everything you raise, meaning your funds will be DOUBLED!

Together, we can support refugees so they have a chance for a brighter future for themselves, their families and their community.

So, whether this is your first race, you're doing it as a team or aiming for a personal best, let's have fun and make this a challenge to remember.



Lisa Felton

Head of Vodafone Foundation

GETTING HERE

BASECAMP LOCATION

Mapledurham Country Park, Upper Woodcote Rd, Caversham, Reading.

Please use the What3Words below for the exact entry location into the site. Disregard any postcodes found online which will direct you to another location.

What3Words: [///rinse.groom.latest](https://w3w.co/rinse.groom.latest)
<https://w3w.co/rinse.groom.latest>

Participants are responsible for arranging their own transport to and from the event.

TRAIN

The nearest train stations is **Reading**, which is approximately a 15-minute drive.

Free shuttle buses will be available between Reading Train Station and the basecamp.

Any journeys outside of these times will need to be arranged by taxi.

To the event from Reading Station

SHUTTLE TIME	APPROX ARRIVAL TIME
06:30	06:45
08:30	08:45
09:00	09:15
10:00	10:15
10:30	10:45

From the event to Reading Station

SHUTTLE TIME	APPROX ARRIVAL TIME
16:00	16:15
17:00	17:15
18:00	18:15
19:00	19:15

Please note, the shuttles will be leaving at the given time, so please allow time to arrive.

Spaces are limited and must be booked in advance via the **Transport Survey**. The booking deadline is **23:59 on Wednesday 27th** August.

CAR

Free parking is available at the basecamp for around 200 cars. Please indicate whether you will require this on the **Transport Survey**. Please remember to car-share where you can.

There will also be a drop-off and pick-up area with a maximum wait time of 30 mins. This does not need to be booked.

All cars are left at owners' risk and must be collected before the car park closes at **19:15**.



**Vodafone
Foundation**

ARRIVAL & REGISTRATION

REGISTRATION

You will receive your Registration Pack **when you arrive at the event**. This will include:

- Race number (with timing chip)
- Luggage label
- Accreditation wristband (to be worn at all times)

For further details please see our FAQ page.

Registration is open from 06:30-11:30.

CHANGING DISTANCE

If you would like to change your distance on the day, please head to the information tent after you have collected your race bib, and the team there will be able to manage your change.

BAG DROP

You will be able to leave a day bag with valuables and spare clothing at the basecamp whilst you are out on the route.

This will be kept at the bag drop which will be manned at all times. Please attach your luggage label to the bag before you drop it off.

START WAVES

We operate a staggered start system. Start waves will be allocated based on your distance.

Please arrive no more than 45 minutes before your allocated start time, but leave enough time to register and collect your race number.

WAVE	TIME
Marathon walk	07:30
Marathon run	09:30
Half marathon walk	10:00
Half marathon run	11:00
10km run and walk	11:40

GUIDE RUNNING

If you would like to learn about guide running, and help Simon Wheatcroft to complete the 10km, please meet outside the Foundation Fair Stretch Tent before the 10km wave is called.

KEY TIMINGS

Event schedule

06:20	Car park opens
06:30	Basecamp and registration opens
07:30	Marathon walk starts
09:30	Marathon run starts
10:00	Half marathon walk starts
11:00	Half marathon run starts
11:40	10km run and walk starts
13:00 – 18:00	Foundation Fair, BBQ & Massage open
13:00 – 16:30	Guided stretch sessions (every 30mins)
19:00	Event village close
19:15	Car park close

THE ROUTES

All routes start and finish at Mapledurham Country Park. All routes can be found via this link:

[ROUTE MAPS](#)

Terrain and difficulty

The condition of the trails for all routes will be quite weather dependant. In a wet period, the trails will become muddy and slippery with some standing water especially in the lower Thames side areas. Lots of the route will be on good trails but there will be areas of uneven, loose and trippy ground.

Half and full marathon (2 loops for full)

The route leaves Mapledurham heading East towards Caversham. At Fry's Island the route crosses the Thames for the first time on the new pedestrian Christchurch Bridge. After the bridge the route sticks close to the river heading West along the Thames Path. At around 10km the route reaches Tilehurst and in another 6km the route reaches Pangbourne and closes back over the river this time of the scenic Whitchurch Bridge. The route then heads east along a quiet land until reaching Hardwick Hall and drops down through the fields back to the finish at Mapledurham.

10km

This route follows the same direction away from Mapledurham and towards Caversham. After around 2km the route turns north and starts to head out of the river valley and into the Chiltern Hills. Most of the height is gained steadily along a good track. With the height comes some great views. At around 6km the route descends before climbing steadily again in an attractive valley past a farm. At the head of the valley is a mature forest where the trail turns back towards the finish. With 1.3km to go the route comes out of the woods and into open fields, this point on the route has a stunning view across Mapledurham the river and the event village two fields across.

PIT STOP INFORMATION

There will be at least one pit stop on every route and the approximate distances of these can be found below:

Full marathon

- Pit stop 1 – 7km
- Pit stop 2 – 16km
- Pit stop 3 – 21km
- Pit stop 4 – 28km
- Pit stop 5 – 37km

Half marathon

- Pit stop 1 – 7km
- Pit stop 2 – 16km

10km

- Pit stop 1 – 5km

Pitstops will be well stocked across the event and will vary slightly at each pit stop but remain consistent with the same types of foods.

Pit-stop refreshments will include:

- High 5 Sports Nutrition: Zero Tabs, Energy Source and Gels
- Squash and water
- Fruit
- Chocolate and sweets
- Crisps and other savoury snacks

Please ensure you bring your own water bottle or camelbak to refill at these water points.

FACILITIES, FOOD & DRINK

FACILITIES	BASECAMP	PIT STOPS
Toilets	✓	✓
Food	✓	✓
Water stations	✓	✓
Bar	✓	
Medics	✓	✓
Stretching area	✓	
Massage	✓	

Food throughout the day

On arrival: hot drinks and pastries will be available.

Lunch: Grab-and-go packed lunches will be available to collect in basecamp before you head out for the day.

We advise walkers to carry them in their rucksacks so that they are to hand over lunch time. Runners may choose whether to carry them or collect them on return to basecamp.

BBQ: a BBQ meal will be available throughout the afternoon from 13:00 – 18:00.

Drinks throughout the day

Tea and coffee will be available at the basecamp, and there will be water provided at all pit-stops and at basecamp.

Once you have finished your challenge there will be a bar serving alcoholic and soft drinks throughout the afternoon. Please note these are limited to 2 per person included in your ticket price. More drinks will be available to purchase by cash and card at the bar.

If you indicated any **dietary requirements** during sign-up, please speak to a member of the crew who will advise on the alternatives available.

ROUTE & SAFETY

EVENT CONTROL

Emergency numbers will be on the back of your race number. They will call through to our EVENT CONTROL team. Please make sure you add these numbers to your mobile contacts list

Please inform Event Control if you leave the event at any point.

- **MEDICAL AND EMERGENCY** – 0330 223 6671
- **NON-EMERGENCY** – 0330 223 6675

IF YOU GET LOST

Stop and use reference points to try to work out where you are.

Walk back to your last known point/arrow.

If you are still lost, stay where you are and call **EVENT CONTROL**.

CASUALTY PROCEDURE

Call 999 direct in a medical emergency.

Apply First Aid and try to make your way to the nearest pit stop (medics onsite).

Ask for help from fellow participants.

If you cannot make it to the pit stop, call EVENT CONTROL.

EVACUATION FROM THE ROUTE

In the case of a medical emergency, we will arrange evacuation from the course.

If you are just having trouble completing the distance, try to get to the next pit stop where our team will be able to support.

SIGNAGE

All of the route will be marked with red arrows.

Route maps are available on our website, but always follow the event signage in case there are any last-minute changes to the route.

WHILE ON THE ROUTE

Follow **ALL** event arrows.

Follow the Highway Code when crossing or walking/running on roads.

Please stop at pit stops and don't get waylaid in local pubs.

Inform **EVENT CONTROL** if you leave the route for any reason.

NAVIGATIONAL DEVICES

Route distances are gathered using an electronic mapping system. This is as accurate as possible, but discrepancies can occur between different GPS running computers and atmospheric conditions. This may lead to minor differences in distance on the route.

MEDICAL SUPPORT

There are medical provisions at the Basecamp and at pit stops. There will also be emergency medical care available along the route.

TOP TIPS FROM OUR MEDICS

HYDRATION, HYDRATION, HYDRATION!

If you are thirsty then you need to drink. Don't overdo the energy drink or gels, as they can cause nausea/diarrhoea.

ADDRESS AN ISSUE IMMEDIATELY

A little niggle or pain can lead to something more serious. Please seek medical attention as soon as you can.

BLISTERS

Please bring plenty of blister treatment with you as medics are there to treat more serious cases.

A NOTE ON PAINKILLERS

When it comes to painkillers, we recommend paracetamol. Ibuprofen is an alternative, but there are concerns about its use with other NSAIDs (Diclofenac, Naproxen etc.) during endurance events. If used when dehydrated or with severe muscle damage, there is a potential risk of kidney damage.

NSAIDs can also cause stomach problems. If you have kidney or GI problems, we would strongly avoid using NSAIDs. If you do choose to use them, maintain hydrated and seek help if your urine becomes very dark. If in doubt, ask our medics.

PLEASE NOTE: Routine use of painkillers for muscle aches and pains is discouraged.

KIT LIST

RUN/WALK SPECIFIC KIT LIST

You will need to bring:

- Breathable running/walking t-shirt
- Shorts/leggings
- Trail shoes/running trainers (comfortable and worn in)
- Pair of socks
- Sunglasses
- Waterproof jacket (recommend lightweight)
- Mobile phone (fully charged)
- Battery pack
- Sun cream
- Water bottle / camelback
- Walking poles (if desired)
- Small rucksack

PERSONAL FIRST AID KIT

- Your normal painkillers of choice
- Fabric plasters
- Blister fabric e.g. RockTape/Compeed
- Any personal medication (prescription or non-prescription)

POST EVENT GEAR

- Flip flops/trainers
- Warm clothes to change into if desired



There will be changing gazebos available on site, however we recommend coming to the event as ready as you can to take on the challenge.

FOUNDATION FAIR

Want to explore how Vodafone Foundation is changing and saving lives around the world?

The Foundation Fair will be at the finish line, ready for you to discover what your Foundation is doing in our markets.

Play with the kit that we're using in schools across Europe to improve digital skills, discover how m-mama and NG-SOS are saving lives, and hear from Vodafone volunteers who have deployed to emergency zones to restore connectivity.

Find out how we're supporting people aged 65+ to connect with the digital world, how we're helping young people to stay safe online, and how we're making sure that people experiencing domestic abuse are not alone.

Plus meet some of our charity partners first-hand to hear more about their vital work.



FUNDRAISING

All funds raised through Step for Schools go to Vodafone Foundation's long-term partner, UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency.

Funds will be used for Instant Network Schools, to ensure more refugee children and young people can access a quality digital education.

Education is not just a fundamental human right; it is a powerful tool for empowerment and a pathway to a better future. Yet of the 14.8 million school-aged refugee children, 49% are estimated to be out of school.

That's more than 7 million refugee children currently missing out on an education.

To address this, Vodafone Foundation and UNHCR have worked together since 2013 to improve the quality of education by providing refugee hosting classrooms with technology, connectivity, digital resources, content, training and more.

Instant Network Schools operate in Kenya, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Mozambique, South Sudan and Tanzania.



Credit: UNHCR / Brian Otieno

Vodafone Foundation and UNHCR have ambitions to open more Instant Network Schools, to reach half a million students by 2026.

Being a refugee is not a choice. Together, we can support refugees so they too have a chance for a brighter future for themselves, their families and their community.

Matched funding

Vodafone Foundation will match all funds raised through Step For Schools, meaning that anything you raise will be doubled.

[Set up your fundraiser here](#)

FAQs

Can I change my distance on the day?

Absolutely, if you want to either increase or decrease your distance on the day, head to the info tent after you have picked up your registration pack and they will be able to help you.

Can I sign up on the day?

Unfortunately not, registrations close on Friday 22nd August, so make sure all your colleagues have signed up before then, so they don't miss out!

Is the route signed?

Yes, all routes are fully signed with red and white arrows.

Can I bring my dog?

Unfortunately, no dogs can take part in the Step for Schools event with the exception of assistance dogs. This is due to specific landowner permissions, which means dogs are not permitted anywhere along the route, including the start and finish locations.

If you require the help from an assistance dog, please email us at vodafonefoundation@thresholdsports.co.uk

What is the terrain like and what footwear is best?

Lots of the route will be on good trails but there will be areas of uneven, loose and trippy ground.

We would recommend a decent running trainer or trail running shoes.

Make sure you break in your chosen footwear before the event. You should have a thumb's width between the end of your toe & the end of the shoe.

Socks are as vital as the shoes; the wrong pair can cause discomfort even in well-fitting shoes. Your socks should fit snugly and be a comfortable length so they don't fall down when you're moving. Look for socks made from natural materials like cotton or wool.

Do I need to bring any food or drink?

All food and drinks will be provided from arrival at the basecamp, on the route and back at the basecamp after your challenge. If you do have any favourite personal snacks please feel free to bring them too! You must bring a water bottle / camelbak to fill up and take with you on the route.

What time will I arrive at the finish line?

This is totally dependent on how fast you run/walk! We'd expect participants to be arriving at the finish from 13:00 onwards so we will be ready to welcome you to the celebrations.

GOOD LUCK, ENJOY THE CHALLENGE

For any other questions, visit our Participant Hub or email us at vodafonefoundation@thresholdsports.co.uk

We can't wait to welcome you to the Step for Schools Challenge!

Good luck...

