

FJORD THE AVALANCHE DOG

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Fjord the avalanche dog helps educate children in the basics of snow safety and winter resort orientation. Snow Safety Coach & Search & Rescue Avalanche Dog Handler Caroline Elliott explains more.

Caroline Elliott her owner has spent over 10 years in ski patrol rescue and has jumped many hurdles in the French Alps to pass the rigorous exams to integrate the French system.

Her mission now is to spread the word through fun engaging talks and workshops so groups of school children can enjoy to the full their visit to the mountains over the winter.

"A lot of accidents could be avoided with right awareness and though the mountain resorts are generally a safe enjoyable environment accidents do occur, causing discomfort and anguish for those involved."

Can you drive a car without taking a theory and then practical exam? No definitely not! But many groups rely only on the expertise of the instructors when they arrive in resort who don't always have the time or interest in teaching the basic safety education.

I never forget as a child one moment in particular whilst on a ski trip with a reputable company that specialises in holidays for

schools. I found myself in a with an instructor who comes across a slope that is visibly shut (I remember the bright orange sign well with the wording 'closed'), his reaction was, oh this will be good, let's go!. We went down the slope and luckily nothing happened untoward. Too often than not we take the 'thinking and decision' making out of youngster's hands, we should however be empowering them, giving them the skills to understand their environment so they don't end up in a collision, or ride down a closed slope where the insurance will be void.

With 'Fjordsar' we help introduce a resort to newcomers and also reinforce the positive behaviour for those already accustomed to this incredible environment. Health and safety is paramount these days and the teachers and those accompanying can gain a lot too from our visit. Safety has no a price.

Our mission is to make you safer and not scare you! Our motto is; 'Learn Explore Stay Safe'

We also get to learn all about the life of an avalanche dog which is really a magical fascinating world. How does Fjord find people in the snow? What do we need to do to prepare him for the winter. What do we do if we witness an avalanche?

We have now returned to the mountains to work for the French holiday period and refresh Fjord's avalanche memory skills, he has to pass exams to work every year.