

POLICY TITLE: Outdoor Adventure Activities

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IDENTIFIER: OAA200908

LEGISLATION: Education Act 2004

1. POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 All outdoor adventure activities must meet the mandated requirements set out in the policy and activity specific procedures. The teacher in-charge is required to adhere to the relevant mandatory procedures when organising the activity and the principal must ensure that the teacher in-charge is competent to plan, supervise and participate in the activity. Relevant documentation must be verified by the school principal and approved by the School Network Leader prior to the activity taking place.
- 1.2 The Outdoor Adventure Activities Policy and Mandatory Procedures aim to ensure that all outdoor adventure activities provided are conducted with the highest regard for the safety of all participants.
- 1.3 This policy and procedures document is to be read in conjunction with the Directorate's *Excursions Policy (2006)*, its related documents and any other documents relevant to particular activities or circumstances.
- 1.4 This policy and procedures document comprises three parts:
 - Part 1 – Policy
 - Part 2 – Forms/Attachments
 - Part 3 – Activity Specific ProceduresAll parts, where relevant to the activity, must be adhered to.

2. RATIONALE

This policy outlines the Directorate's standards for outdoor adventure activities. The potentially hazardous elements and often the remoteness of the settings of outdoor adventure activities set them apart from other school activities and necessitate special precautions for the safety of participants. In conjunction with associated procedures and guidelines, this policy aims to minimise inherent risks by promoting safe procedures in the management of students taking part in outdoor adventure activities.

3. DEFINITIONS

Accompanying adults include teachers, school administrative staff, parents, activity leaders and community members known to the school and of good character.

Activity leader (or leader) is the person with the relevant qualifications and/or experience to lead the activity. The leader may be, for example, a canoeing expert who is not necessarily a teacher.

Activity-specific procedures are the mandatory procedures relating to specific outdoor activities contained in this document.

Duty of care is a legal duty that requires that teachers should take all reasonable measures to prevent harm to any school student under their care. This duty of care arises whenever a student–teacher relationship exists.

Excursion refers to a teacher supervised, school-organised activity involving students and is directly related to the curriculum of the school. An excursion is a variation to normal school activity (Refer to *Excursions Policy* (2006)).

Hours of duty are the times teachers have duty of care of students, including excursions and activities outside normal school hours.

Informed consent means that **parents** give agreement to their child's participating in an activity after they have been made aware of the details of the activity including its associated risks and costs.

Non-remote is generally a location that is not more than 30 minutes from a fixed-line telephone, not more than 20 minutes from vehicle access, and less than one and a half hours from access to medical assistance.

Outdoor adventure is a dynamic form of education involving outdoor activities with potential risks.

Outdoor adventure activities potentially place students at a higher level of risk than in a usual school. The higher level of risk is due to the nature of the activity (for example, rock climbing, canoeing, skiing) or the circumstances in which the activity takes place (for example, a remote setting, a river or mountain environment, or likelihood of bad weather).

Parent(s) refers to adults with parental responsibilities, including carers.

Policy means the present document (*Outdoor Adventure Activities: Policy and Mandatory Procedures 2009*, including all attachments).

Procedures are the detailed and specified steps and processes to be observed in the planning and delivery of outdoor adventure activities.

Remote is a location that is more than 30 minutes from access to a fixed-line telephone, and/or more than 20 minutes from vehicle access, and/or greater than one and a half hours from access to medical assistance.

Risk management planning is defined by the standards in the Directorate's *Risk Management Framework*. Further guidance is provided in Part 2-Forms/Attachment 8.

Safety and Emergency Contingency Plan refers to the written plan detailing the safety and emergency procedures the group will follow whilst on the outdoor adventure activity. (See Part 2-Forms/Attachments 9 for template).

Supervision ratio refers to the supervisor to student ratio. The ratio will vary with each activity. Please refer to activity-specific procedures.

Teacher in-charge is the teacher designated by the principal to organise the outdoor adventure activity and to have ultimate responsibility and therefore authority while the activity is in progress.

4. PROCEDURES

- 4.1 The principal must have an understanding of all planned outdoor adventure activities, and must assess and manage the specific risks, prior to and at the time of delivery.
- 4.2 The principal must ensure that the activity complies with the Directorate's Excursions Policy (2006) and relevant activity-specific mandatory procedures specified in Part 3 of the Policy and Procedures document.
- 4.3 The principal must ensure that the teacher in-charge is competent to supervise and participate in an activity.
- 4.4 The teacher in-charge must comply with all relevant policies, procedures and legislation listed under **RELATED DOCUMENTS**.
- 4.5 The mandatory application and approval process is set out below.
 - Teacher in-charge completes the *Application for Approval of Outdoor Adventure Activities* form
 - Principal authorises in writing that the excursion/activity has been appropriately planned at school level and that all required documentation has been sighted
 - Applications for all activities (except those listed as exempt in 6.2 and 6.3), together with all relevant details of the outdoor adventure activity is lodged with the Executive Officer PE and Sport at least three weeks prior to the activity
 - Executive Officer PE and Sport signs to indicate that the activity meets procedural requirements
 - The relevant School Network Leader provides the final signature to indicate that the Outdoor Adventure Activity may proceed
 - School Network Leaders office notifies the school that the activity has been approved.
- 4.6 It is mandatory for all schools planning any activity of an outdoor nature to:
 - Comply with the *Risk Management Framework*
 - Complete a *Risk Management Plan*; and
 - Develop a *Safety and Emergency Contingency Plan*

5. QUALIFICATIONS AND FIRST AID

5.1 The teacher in-charge must ensure that all activity leaders are prepared by qualification and/or experience to conduct the activity as detailed in the activity-specific mandatory procedures (Part 3). Qualification requirements vary according to activity type.

5.2 Activity leaders are categorised as either:

- Leaders who require demonstrated and documented experience, or
- Leaders who require formal qualifications.

5.2.1 Activities requiring activity leaders with **demonstrated and documented experience** are:

- base camping
- bouldering
- bushwalking (in areas not requiring advanced navigational skills and/or in areas where there are no potentially hazardous environmental factors) (Part 3, p 30)
- cross-country ski day trips – resort based cycle touring
- horizontal caving
- mountain biking
- orienteering
- sail boarding
- shore fishing
- snow sports – resort based
- surf activities
- top rope climbing on climbing walls

5.2.2 Activities requiring activity leaders with **formal qualifications** are:

- abseiling
- bushwalking (in areas requiring advanced navigational skills and/or in areas where there may be potentially hazardous environmental factors)
- canoeing/kayaking, flat water
- canoeing/kayaking, white water
- canyoning
- caving
- cross-country skiing, day trips, resort based
- cross-country skiing, day trips, non resort-based
- cross-country skiing, overnight
- high ropes courses
- horse trekking
- ocean sailing
- rock climbing
- sailing, dinghies and catamarans
- scuba diving, introductory
- scuba diving, non-qualified

- scuba diving, qualified
- sea kayaking
- snorkelling, beginners
- snorkelling, qualified
- swimming
- top rope climbing
- waterskiing
- white water rafting

5.2.3 Details of the requirements for each activity noted in 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 are set out in the activity-specific mandatory procedures (Part 3).

- 5.3 The teacher in-charge must ensure that at least one accompanying adult, not a student, has a recognised current first aid certificate.
- 5.4 The minimum acceptable first aid qualification is Senior or Advanced First Aid. Wilderness or Remote Areas First Aid is highly recommended for category C and D excursions and for activities classified as other than low risk.
- 5.5 The teacher in-charge must ensure that a suitable first aid kit is readily accessible on all outdoor adventure activities. The design and composition of the kit must be informed by the risk assessment of the activity.
- 5.6 Australian Standard AS 2675-1983 specifies what a general-purpose kit should contain. Kits meeting Australian Standards can be obtained from accredited organisations such as the Australian Red Cross, St John Ambulance Australia and the Wilderness Medicine Institute.
- 5.7 The teacher in-charge must ensure that for student-only outdoor adventure activities (for example, the Duke of Edinburgh Award) students have the capabilities, including first aid training, and the ability to use an appropriate communication device to successfully undertake the activity (refer to Section 10 - Safety and Operating Procedures).
- 5.8 Documented evidence of qualifications and/or experience of activity leaders and first aid officers must be sighted by the principal and copies must be kept on file at the school.

6. LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

- 6.1 For activities requiring knowledge of the local area, the teacher in-charge must source information from two or more of the following:
- a reconnaissance trip to the venue
 - reputable publications and websites
 - recreational practitioners
 - landowners
 - stakeholders (including the traditional owners)

- service providers
- clubs
- National Parks office.

6.2 Inquiries should be made about:

- availability of drinking water
- revegetation areas
- endangered species
- changes to entry and exit points
- areas of significance to local Aboriginal people
- recent rockslides
- recent restrictions such as camping and fire restrictions
- new tracks or roads and new locked gates
- wild dog and wild pig activity
- pest control measures
- blackberry spraying
- hazard reduction work
- temporary deviations to tracks or roads
- discrepancies between venue and the topographical map depicting it.

7. TYPES OF OUTDOOR ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

7.1 The following activities are not appropriate for outdoor adventure activities organised by schools or colleges and are **banned** from being undertaken:

- moving black water rafting
- bungee jumping
- cave diving using scuba
- gliding
- hang-gliding
- ice climbing
- jet skiing
- luge
- ocean rock fishing – from rocks subject to ocean swells
- open water sail boarding
- skydiving
- snow tobogganing
- use of other than purpose-designed craft on moving water or white water (for example, inner tubes).

7.2 Some activities are considered **low risk and are not subject to the mandatory procedures**. Low-risk activities not subject to mandatory procedures include:

- Canberra Yacht Club sailing
- aqua bikes on Lake Burley Griffin
- paddleboats on Lake Burley Griffin
- trips to local parks
- cycle touring on bicycle paths in Canberra

- visits to local pools
- simple day walks within urban areas and Canberra parks
- bouldering on Canberra urban walls
- commercial equestrian activities in Canberra
- Orienteering day activities.

7.2.1 It is not necessary to submit an Application for Approval of Outdoor Adventure Activities to Executive Officer PE and Sport for activities in this category.

7.2.2 However, the teacher in-charge is required to:

- collect current medical information forms and permission notes
- provide group preparation and guidelines to students and their parents
- obtain approval for the activity from the principal of the school

7.3 The activities listed below are considered **low risk but are still subject to mandatory procedures**:

- mountain biking – on suburban tracks or to locations such as Mount Majura, Sparrow Hill, Mount Stromlo
- canoeing/kayaking on Lake Burley Griffin, Lake Ginninderra or Lake Tuggeranong (lesson or day excursion)
- rock climbing/climbing walls at schools, Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA), commercially operated climbing walls.

7.3.1 For these activities the **teacher in-charge** is required to:

- Adhere to the relevant Mandatory Procedures (Part 3)
- Obtain the approval of the principal.

7.3.2 It is not necessary to submit an Application for Approval of Outdoor Adventure Activities to the Executive Officer PE and Sport.

7.4 The Directorate sanctions a wide range of outdoor adventure activities. All activities not listed in section 7.3 are subject to mandatory procedures and must submit an Application for Approval of an Outdoor Adventure Activities to Executive Officer PE and Sport. Details of the relevant requirements for each activity are set out in the activity-specific mandatory procedures (Part 3).

7.5 The activity-specific mandatory procedures cover a range of activities pursued by schools in the ACT. Additional guidelines and revisions will be issued from time to time, either on request or because new developments are recognised. Schools wishing to conduct activities that are not listed in this policy and are not included in the list of banned activities (see 7.1 of this policy) must contact their school's director giving full details of the proposed activity. Written approval must be obtained before proceeding with the unlisted activity.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 Outdoor adventure activities must be organised with the highest regard for the safety of all participants. Situations where particular attention should be paid to the management of risk includes:
- travel by a group into a remote area
 - limited contact, in person or by telephone, with medical and other public services
 - exposure of the group to the natural elements with less than the usual physical protection provided in day-to-day life
 - confrontation with natural environmental challenges requiring greater reliance upon personal resources than would commonly be required in day-to-day life.
- 8.2 Part of the planning process for each outdoor adventure activity is the requirement to complete a risk management plan. This is a careful examination of what could cause harm to participants during the course of the activity and a plan of practical risk control measures that the teacher in-charge of the activity will put in place to minimise (to an acceptable level) the risk of harm occurring.
- 8.4 For low risk activities listed in 7.2 and 7.3, a risk management plan and safety checklist should be completed prior to the activity and kept on file at school.

9. SUPERVISION REQUIREMENTS

- 9.1 Minimum supervision ratios and criteria are detailed in the *Excursions Policy*. Activity-specific supervision ratios are detailed in relevant mandatory procedures sections (Part 3).
- 9.2 At the discretion of the principal and the teacher in-charge/activity leader, the number of adults will at times be higher than in the stated ratio because of:
- age, experience or capability of the students
 - combined experience or expertise of the staff
 - nature of the area in which the activity is to be conducted
- 9.3 If the group undertaking the activity is split into smaller, independent subgroups then each subgroup must conform to the criteria set out in this section as well as those in the *Excursions Policy*.

10. COMMUNICATION

- 10.1 For remote activities, local and, where appropriate, interstate authorities are to be notified both before departure and on return. Authorities may include rangers, police, bushfire council and landowners.
- 10.2 Telephone contact must be possible for the duration of the activity. A satellite or mobile phone must be carried. If mobile coverage can not be ascertained prior to the activity, a satellite phone must be carried.
- 10.3 It is mandatory to carry a Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) to remote locations. This should only be used in an extreme emergency. Information about PLBs can be obtained from the Bushwalkers Wilderness Rescue Squad website (<http://www.bwrs.org.au/pages/epirb.html>).

11. SAFETY PROCEDURES

- 11.1 All activities can only be performed with equipment tested and certified to Australian Standards where relevant.
- 11.2 Inspections of equipment and facilities as identified in the mandatory procedures must be followed within the designated guidelines and timelines.
- 11.3 Students and accompanying adults are required to remove jewellery and other ornaments when they are deemed a threat to safety or as specified in the activity-specific Mandatory Procedures (Part 3).
- 11.4 Students and accompanying adults are required to secure long hair if it is likely to impair vision or impede performance.

Policy Owner: Director, Learning and Teaching

Related Documents:

Education and Training Directorate policies found on www.det.act.gov.au

- *Accidents – Schools and Other Workplaces* (1997)
- *Administration of Prescribed Medication, Catheters and Injections to Students* (1997)
- *Alcohol – Possession and Consumption in Schools and at School-related Activities* (1998)
- *Corporate Sponsorship* (2001)
- *Excursions Policy* (2006)
- *First Aid and Infection Control* (2003)
- *Health and Safety Policy – First Aid* (2003)
http://www.det.act.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0017/18332/firstaid.pdf
- *Physical education and sport policy* (2000)
- *Overseas Excursions Framework* (2005)
- *Risk Management Framework* (2006)
- *School Risk Management and Audit Plan (2007-08)*
- *Statement on Requesting Financial Contributions from Parents* (2005)
- *Student Accidents/Incidents Policy* (2008)
- *Sun Protection Policy* (2006)
- *Visitors in Schools Framework* (2005)
- *Working with Children and Young People – Volunteering Policy* (2003)
- *Working with Children and Young People – Volunteering Procedures* (2003)

ACT Government legislation

- ACT Government *Heritage ACT 2004* (Amended 2008, republished 2009)
<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2004-57/current/pdf/2004-57.pdf>
- ACT Government *Nature Conservation Act 1980* (Amended 2008, republished 2009) <http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/1980-20/current/pdf/1980-20.pdf>

Commonwealth Consolidated Acts

- *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act 1984*
- *Australian Standards Manual*
- *Australian Safety Standards (ASSN)* (<http://www.ascc.gov.au/>)
- *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*