



Department of
Education

RECREATION AND OUTDOOR EDUCATION ACTIVITIES FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS PROCEDURES

EFFECTIVE: 21 JULY 2025

VERSION: 3.1

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1 POLICY SUPPORTED

Duty of Care for Public School Students Policy.

2 SCOPE

These Procedures apply to all Department Site Managers and to Department employees in public schools who have been nominated to take charge of a recreation and/or outdoor education activity.

3 PROCEDURES

3.1 IMPLEMENTATION

The Department Site Manager must confirm that all the requirements in the 2025 *Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public School Procedures* are implemented on 21 July 2025.

3.2 ALL RECREATION AND OUTDOOR EDUCATION ACTIVITIES

The Department Site Manager must:

- nominate a department employee to take charge of any recreation and/or outdoor education activities undertaken by students
- endorse the required *Excursion Proposal* (*Excursions in Public Schools Procedures*) if the recreation and/or outdoor education activity is held off the school site
- before endorsing a recreation and/or outdoor education activity, confirm that:
 - it has a clear educational purpose
 - high risk activities and locations with potential safety or environmental risks have not been included
 - all recreation and outdoor activities comply with *Appendix A: General Requirements*
 - requirements of relevant *CEO Instructions* are adhered to
 - all relevant activity specific requirements have been addressed:
 - Abseiling and Climbing
 - Bushwalking
 - Camping
 - Caving
 - Cycling, Cycle Touring and Mountain Biking
 - Equine Activities
 - Orienteering, Rogaining and Navigation
 - Paddling
 - Power Boating
 - Ropes Courses and Bouldering
 - Sailing and Sail Boarding
 - Scuba Diving
 - Snorkelling
 - Surf Riding
 - Swimming and Water Based Activities

The nominated Department Teacher-in-charge must:

- plan and conduct recreation and/or outdoor education activities in accordance with Appendix A: General Requirements which apply to all recreation and/or outdoor education activities and the mandated requirements in the activity-specific documents
- complete a *relevant Excursion Proposal* (Excursions in Public Schools Procedures) where the recreation and/or outdoor activity is held off the school site, and submit to their Site Manager for approval (Section A.1. in Appendix A: General Requirements)
- ensure that requirements of relevant CEO Instructions are adhered to
- confirm that an appropriate duty of care, including the provision of adequate supervision, is provided to students who are not engaged in activities.

For onsite and offsite recreation and outdoor education activities, not addressed specifically in these procedures (i.e. there is no activity-specific document), the Department Teacher-in-charge must meet the mandated requirements in Appendix A: General Requirements. If you are unsure about the nature of the proposed activity, please contact your Education Regional Office.

Guidance

High risk activities are those that pose an inherent and increased risk of injury, illness or harm to the participant. Examples of prohibited high risk activities include, but are not limited to:

- *bungee jumping*
- *sky diving*
- *paragliding/hangliding*
- *shooting.*

Snow sports and activities carry inherent risks and can be considered high risk activities. Often there is a requirement that a waiver is signed on entry to the resort. Section 10.2 of Appendix A: General Requirements, details the mandated requirement that waivers are not signed.

Examples of potential environmental or safety risks include, but are not limited to:

- *lightning flashes or strikes*
- *storms*
- *strong or severe winds*
- *storm surges or severe waves*
- *strong tidal areas*
- *shark alerts and known estuarine crocodile habitats*
- *bush fire alerts and/or very high temperatures*
- *locations of potential risk, such as the Wittenoom township.*

4

DEFINITIONS

ACTIVITY

Any activity to which these procedures apply.

APPROVED PROVIDER

An entity that has been through the formal procurement process and is listed on the current Excursions in Public Schools Procedures Approved Provider Register (excluding interstate and international excursions).

ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR

Assists the Qualified Supervisor and Department Teacher-in-charge. At a minimum, they must have recent and relevant experience in the activity, at the level being offered to the students.

BUSH FIRE

Fire in natural areas, may be controlled or uncontrolled.

BRIEFING

Informing a person or group of people thoroughly, especially in preparation for an activity, prior to undertaking the activity or a section of the activity.

CHALLENGE BY CHOICE

When the student is empowered to decide whether to participate in an activity. The leader and others in a group are expected to respect anyone's right to sit out or to choose a personalised level of engagement.

COMPETENCE

Ability to apply knowledge and skills to achieve expected results.

COMPETENCIES

Gained through formal education or training. Specific skills and knowledge, which are required to perform a particular job or task.

CONTEXT

The group of conditions, circumstances and facts that inform planning of a recreation and outdoor education activity.

CURRENCY

Currency provides assurance that the evidence (for example, qualifications, certificates, log-book experience) is relevant, and recent enough to show that the supervisor is competent to make point-in-time decisions related to the proposed activity.

CUSTODIANS

Those who are responsible for looking after places and the knowledge, stories and ceremonies linked to these places.

DEPARTMENT TEACHER-IN-CHARGE

A member of the teaching staff employed by the Department of Education (or an Approved Provider) and is to manage the proposed activity.

DEPARTMENT SITE MANAGER

Any officer who has executive responsibility for the overall management of any Department site (i.e. Principal).

DIRECT SUPERVISION

To be physically present, or within an immediate distance and available to respond to the needs of someone.

DUTY OF CARE

A duty imposed by law to take reasonable care to minimise the risk of harm that can reasonably be foreseen when students are involved in all school activities, whether on or off the Department site.

DYNAMIC RISK MANAGEMENT

The process of continuously observing, assessing and mitigating risks and hazards, in a changing environment.

EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE

An outcome linked to student educational programs, Western Australian Curriculum outcomes and/or the total educational program of the school.

EMERGENCY POSITION-INDICATING RADIO BEACON (EPIRB)

Tracking transmitter which aids in the detection and location of boats, aircraft and people in distress.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

A systematic planned response to any incident that threatens safety, health and/or welfare.

EXCURSION

Any student-learning activity conducted off the site of the school, at which the student is enrolled, that:

- has an educational purpose
- is organised or managed by a member of staff employed by the Department of Education or a representative of an Approved Provider
- involves any associated costs being paid directly to the school, not to a third party
- is insured by the Department of Education
- has gained the appropriate approval(s).

EXTERNAL PROVIDER

A business, entity or individual paid by the school to provide a venue, service and/or expertise appropriate to a particular school activity.

FIRE DANGER PERIOD

A designated time of the year, as specified by the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, when there is a heightened bushfire risk.

FLASH FLOODING

Flooding in a localised area with a rapid onset, usually as the result of relatively short intense bursts of rainfall.

GROUP

A number of students, supervisors and/or assistant supervisors, located, gathered or classed together for the purpose of completing a part or whole of an activity.

GUIDANCE

Advice and examples of good practice for implementing policy and procedures. Guidance content is not mandated.

HAZARD

A potential source or situation with the potential for harm.

HIGH RISK ACTIVITY

Any activity which inherently poses an increased risk of injury, illness or harm to the participant.

INDIRECT SUPERVISION

Where a nominated person responsible for supervising others during all or part of the activity is in the vicinity but unable to intervene immediately.

LANDOWNER/MANAGER/LEASEHOLDER

The party that owns and/or has legal responsibility for managing a particular environment. This may include the power to restrict access or place conditions and/or requirements on access. Includes managers of rivers, waterways and other bodies of water

LINE OF SIGHT

A straight line along which an observer has unobstructed vision.

MINIMUM IMPACT PRINCIPLES

Also referred to as Leave-no-trace Principles, they guide minimising the impact on natural environments.

PARTICIPANT

Students who undertake an activity.

PROCEDURES

Detailed specification of steps and processes that are mandated through system wide management. Contravention of a procedure may constitute a breach of discipline pursuant to section 80 of the Public Sector Management Act 1994.

PROCESS

A systematic application of management policies, procedures, and practices, in a series of actions or steps taken to achieve a particular end.

QUALIFIED SUPERVISOR

Has the required qualifications, skill, currency and technical knowledge to instruct the activity.

RECREATION AND OUTDOOR EDUCATION ACTIVITY

Any experiential student learning activity conducted on or off the site of the school at which the student is enrolled, that is organised or managed by a member of staff who is employed by the Department of Education (or an Approved Provider) and has gained the appropriate approval.

REMOTE OR ISOLATED AREAS

Includes any location where medical emergency assistance is more than one hour away by road, air or water.

SUPERVISORY TEAM

Adults who have accepted the responsibility to act in a supervisory role at the proposed activity. Can include (but is not limited to) teachers, education assistants, external providers and parents.

VENUE

The environment, where the proposed recreation and/or outdoor education activities occur. May also be referred to as location, area or site.

5 RELATED DOCUMENTS**Relevant legislation**

Children and Community Services Amendment (Reporting Sexual Abuse of Children) Act 2008
Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (Commonwealth)
Equal Opportunity Act 1984
Work Health and Safety Act 2020 (WA)
Work Health and Safety (General) Regulations 2022 (WA)
Public Sector Management Act 1994 (WA)
School Curriculum and Standards Authority Act 1997 (WA)
School Education Act 1999 (WA)
School Education Regulations 2000 (WA)
Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Commonwealth)
State Records Act 2000 (WA)
Teacher Registration Act 2012 (WA)
The School Education Act Employees' (Teachers and Administrators) General Agreement 2021 (WA)
Volunteers and Food and Other Donors (Protection from Liability) Act 2002 (WA)
Working with Children (Criminal Record Checking) Act 2004 (WA)
Working with Children (Screening) Regulations 2005 (WA)

Related Department policies

Child Protection in Department of Education Sites
Criminal History Screening for Department of Education Sites
Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting in Public Schools
Equal Opportunity, Discrimination and Harassment
Incident Management on Department of Education Sites
Work Health and Safety
Records Management
Research Conducted on Department of Education Sites by External Parties
Risk and Business Continuity Management
Staff Conduct and Discipline
Student Attendance in Public Schools
Student Behaviour in Public Schools
Student Health Care in Public Schools
Students Online in Public Schools
Visitors and Intruders on Public School Premises
Working with Children Checks in Department of Education Sites Policy

Other documents

Disability Standards for Education
Support gender diverse students
First Aid in the Workplace
Keeping our Workplace Safe Guidelines
Insurance and Claims Information
Manage appropriate physical contact with students
School Curriculum and Standards Authority: K-10 Curriculum and Assessment Outline
School Curriculum and Standards Authority: The Western Australian Certificate of Education (The WACE)

6 CONTACT INFORMATION

Policy manager: Manager, Curriculum Priorities
Statewide Services

Policy contact: T: (08) 9402 6217

7 REVIEW DATE

21 July 2028

8 HISTORY OF CHANGES

Effective date	Last update date	Policy version no.	Ref no.	Notes
1 January 2019		1.0	D18/0279557	These new procedures support the Duty of Care for Public School Students policy that replaces the Outdoor Education and Recreation Activities for Public Schools, Duty of Care VET for School Students Attending TAFEWA Colleges from Public Schools and Workplace Learning for Public School policies. Endorsed by the Director General at Corporate Executive on 9 August 2018.
1 January 2019	28 November 2018	1.1	D18/0540713	Director General at Corporate Executive endorsed a transition period to be added to the <i>Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures</i> on 28 November 2018.
1 January 2021		2.0	D20/0031922	Revised procedures endorsed by A/Director General on 9 July 2020 D20/0350265.
1 January 2021	31 March 2021	2.1	D21/0172628	Minor change to reword Excursion Definition. D21/0172483
1 January 2021	27 May 2021	2.2	D21/0281553	Minor change to guidance 3.2. D21/0281556
1 January 2021	18 July 2022	2.3	D22/0540792	Minor changes D22/0539184
1 January 2021	9 June 2023	2.4	D23/1215962	Minor update to contact details Pg 6 D23/1215797
1 January 2021	23 May 2024	2.5	D24/0365058	Minor update to Relevant legislation D24/0365042

21 July 2025		3.0	D24/0575843	Revised procedures endorsed by Director General on 22 nd January 2025 D25/0136995
21 July 2025	12 February 2025	3.1	D25/0172908	Minor change to Decision Making Flowchart Page 11 (Approval D25/0171772)

APPENDIX A. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

This document (*Appendix A: General Requirements*) outlines the general requirements that apply to all recreation and outdoor education activities.

A.1. ON SCHOOL SITE AND OFF SCHOOL SITE

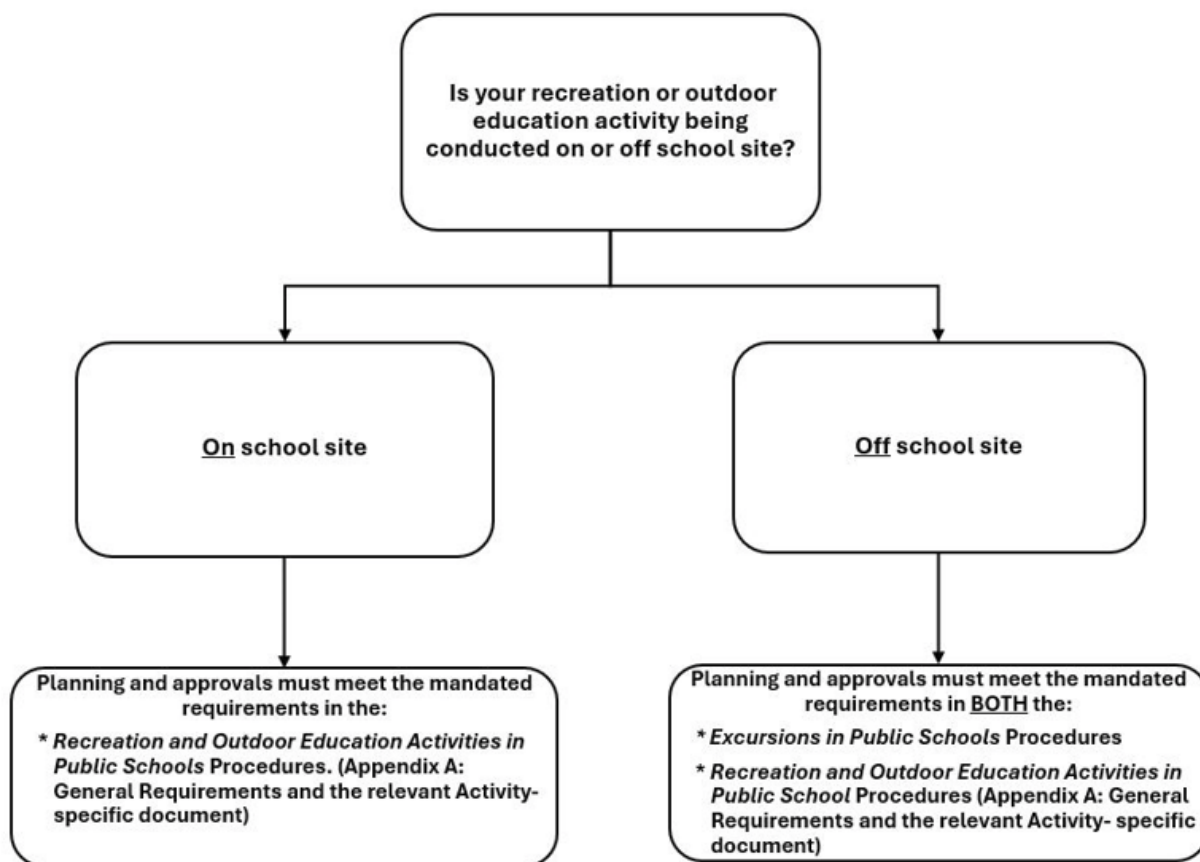
Recreation and outdoor education activities conducted off school site require the relevant excursion approvals to be completed. The school principal is the Excursion Approval Authority for interstate and local area excursions.

All on school site and off school site recreation and outdoor education activities must meet the mandated requirements in Appendix A: General Requirements and the relevant activity-specific documents within the procedures.

Recurring recreation or outdoor education activities that are regularly timetabled off school site may be approved for the same group of students through one proposal form in accordance with the relevant Excursions in Public Schools Procedures document. These can be prepared at the beginning of the year, semester or term, or at the commencement of a unit of study as relevant. Any updated participant or activity information must be provided for each occasion.

Decision making flowchart: Planning activities in public schools

All on-school site and off-school site recreation and outdoor education activities must meet the mandated requirements in the 2025 *Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities in Public Schools Procedures*.



A.2. COMPLETING THE PROPOSAL FOR THE RECREATION AND OUTDOOR EDUCATION ACTIVITY EXCURSION

The Department Teacher-in-charge enters the relevant information in each section of the relevant excursion proposal. Department Site Managers are required to:

- clearly check each aspect of the excursion proposal, confirming that all requirements are addressed
- confirm that all requirements of the *Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities in Public Schools Procedures* have been met and are attached to the proposal.

A.3. EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE

Department Site Managers must ensure that any recreation and outdoor education activity has an educational purpose.

A.4. STUDENT CAPACITY AND HEALTH CARE

When assessing the capacity of each student, the Department Teacher-in-charge must refer to the Department's *Student Health Care in Public Schools* policy and procedures and also take into consideration:

- the purpose of the activity
- their age, skill levels, cultural background, experience, physical capacity (weight, height, strength), maturity, as well as their social, emotional and intellectual capacity
- the pre-requisites skills required (for example, swimming ability)
- their behavioural characteristics
- their health status and/or any degree of disability or impairment
- their attendance at relevant training sessions or courses
- any applicable minimum age restrictions.

A reassessment of students' capacities must be undertaken if circumstances surrounding the activity change. This includes any change in the environment or of a student's medical fitness (for example, conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, fatigue, dehydration) that could affect their capacity to undertake the activity.

Students who have a medically diagnosed condition that may impact their safety must be cleared by a medical practitioner before they can participate.

Appropriate adjustments or alternative activities must be provided for students so they can access the curriculum activity on the same basis as their peers.

Guidance

Students who experience discomfort about an activity have the right to refuse to participate in all or any part of the activity. Their right to refuse is to be respected by others in the group and by the Supervisory Team.

A Challenge by Choice approach is based on the understanding that everyone has varying thresholds for challenge that range in nature and variety. Recreation and outdoor education activities enable students to determine their own level of challenge and to broaden and develop their perceived limitations through participation in safe adventure activity experience, and in individual and team environments. This ethos recognises that the attempt is more significant than the result.

Before students participate in an activity, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that:

- potential risks associated with the proposed activity have been identified and adjustments made to mitigate those risks (refer to *Appendix B: Risk Management Plan*)

- an emergency response plan has been prepared (refer to *Appendix C: Emergency Response Plan*)
- the full range of activities have been assessed and opportunities for students to develop pre-requisite skills have been identified
- relevant consultation has been undertaken with staff members, parent/caregiver and/or community, regarding the cultural appropriateness and inclusiveness of the proposed activities
- physical boundaries and behavioural expectations have been defined for each activity
- students will be introduced to activities in a non-threatening, supportive environment
- they have referred to *Appendix A: General Requirements* for all recreation and outdoor activities and any of the requirements contained in the relevant activity specific documents
- students are not exposed to environments (for example, venues, bushland, walk trails) that have not been assessed first-hand (where practical) by the Department Teacher-in-charge or a nominated member of the supervisory team.

A.4.1. TRANSGENDER AND INTERSEX STUDENTS

School staff must access information and resources through the *Support gender diverse students* Ikon service, to create supportive and inclusive environments when planning recreation and outdoor education activities.

A.5. SUPERVISORY TEAM

A.5.1. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that a risk assessment of the proposed recreation and/or outdoor education activity has occurred. The information contained in the risk assessment will inform the decision regarding the number of adults required for the supervisory team and the experience, qualifications, and skills necessary to provide adequate supervision and manage all identified hazards and risks. The role and selection of the supervisor/s for a recreation or outdoor education activity is determined by the Department Teacher-in-charge and must reflect the requirements of the group.

All supervisors must:

- comply with all requirements of land managers, leaseholders and/or landowners
- wear suitable clothing and footwear that enables them to be easily identifiable and provide assistance during the proposed activity
- remain on duty for the duration of the activity
- remain on call at all times if providing overnight supervision
- be prepared to take responsibility for students at short notice, in the event of an emergency
- not consume illicit drugs or alcohol
- not consume medications that will impair judgement during any school activity or excursion.

The Department Teacher-in-charge confirms that parents/carers are provided with full details of the activity well in advance, to enable them to make an informed decision about their child's participation.

Supervisors must be provided with details of the number of supervisors present at activities and the roles they will perform.

All Department employees have a duty of care to protect students from risk of harm that can reasonably be foreseen when students are involved in all school activities, whether on or off the school site.

All supervisors are required to be available for the supervision of students at all times.

Duty of care always rests with the teacher(s) even if other Department employees, parents or carers are acting as supervisors.

Adults, who are not teachers, can be supervisors if they possess the appropriate skills, experience, competencies and/or qualifications to provide care for the relevant student group and manage risks. Supervisors must be made aware that they are required to supervise students at all times for the duration of the activity. Where a member of the non-teaching staff or a volunteer agrees to perform tasks that require them to personally care for students in the absence of a member of the teaching staff, the suitability of that adult for the task being assigned must take into account the:

- number of students involved
- capacity of the students
- activities to be undertaken
- characteristics of the environment (site, location or venue)
- the health status, skills, competencies, qualifications and experience of the adult.

Guidance

Non-teaching staff who are a part of the supervisory team, have a right to refuse a request to personally care for students and to have their decision respected. However, they have limited scope to refuse a request from teaching staff to personally care for students if, by reason of their prearranged description of responsibilities, the request relates to a task they are required to perform as part of their normal duties.

Educational interpreters who facilitate communication between profoundly deaf and/or hearing impaired students and their teachers, other group members and hearing students, need to have a natural or planned break of complete rest for at least ten (10) minutes every hour. For further information, contact the School of Special Educational Needs: Sensory (based at the Statewide Services Centre, Padbury).

Site Managers and the Department Teacher-in-charge must refer to the *General Requirements* that apply to all recreation and/or outdoor education activities and the requirements contained in the relevant activity specific documents. Where a number of recreation and/or outdoor education activities are delivered simultaneously (for example, on a camp) a member of the teaching staff must be present at each activity.

Collectively, the supervisory team must have the following experience, knowledge and skills:

- The expertise to identify and establish an environment that promotes the safety and wellbeing of all students participating in the activity.
- Current qualifications, competencies or skill sets that are relevant and activity specific currency.
- Appropriate first aid and CPR qualifications for the activity and the location.
- The ability to identify and manage potential risks at all stages of the proposed activity.
- The ability to competently deal with emergencies that may be associated with that type of activity and location.
- The expertise to render emergency care, including a rescue or evacuation.
- The ability to monitor and assess the physical wellbeing of students at all stages of the activity.

- The expertise to assess and respond to weather or other environmental conditions, before and during activities.

Site Managers are to confirm compliance with the Department's Working With Children Check in Public Schools Policy with regard to excursion supervisors, including volunteers if relevant. It should be noted that some volunteers may be exempt from having a working with children check.

The nature and location of the activity determines the first aid qualifications required.

Fragile, physically demanding, remote and isolated environments require a higher level of planning, and student and staff preparation. These should be documented in Appendix B: Risk Management Plan and Appendix C: Emergency Response Plan.

Guidance

Remote or isolated areas include any location where definitive medical care is more than one hour away by road, air or water, or where access to medical assistance is likely to be hampered by time, terrain, distance or circumstances. Examples of fragile and physically demanding environments include national parks, bushland, designated wilderness, mountain or alpine areas, ocean or beaches.

Consideration should be given to the inclusion of an additional Qualified Supervisor when dividing students into subgroups; to enhance learning opportunities and communication across groups and to offer expertise and support in the event of a rescue or incident.

Minimum impact principles should be considered when determining group or subgroup numbers.

Activities conducted in aquatic environments require a high degree of dynamic risk assessment and management. Refer to Appendix S: Swimming and Water Based Activities document for information regarding supervision requirements in various water environments and assessing student swimming and water safety skills prior to the activity commencing.

Supervisors must maintain evidence of currency (recent and relevant experience) using a logbook (or similar), to demonstrate currency.

Guidance

A contact person from a relevant organisation or association who has the authority to verify their skills, expertise, experience and currency in the context of a specific activity (e.g. a fellow leader, supervisor, manager, experienced professional) should be listed within the log book to assist the verification process.

A.5.2. QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team, including external providers, have:

- relevant qualifications, competencies and/or skill sets, as appropriate for the proposed activity
- at least one supervisor at the activity, with current resuscitation accreditation.

A.5.3. FIRST AID QUALIFICATION

As a minimum requirement, at least one member of the supervisory team must hold a nationally accredited first aid qualification that is relevant to the proposed activity and location, for all land-based activities such as:

- Provide First Aid

- Provide First Aid in Remote or Isolated Site
- Provide Advanced First Aid
- an equivalent award, as recognised by the Director General.

A.5.4. AQUATIC RESCUE QUALIFICATION

All aquatic based activities require the supervisory team to meet the rescue qualification requirements listed in the relevant activity specific document. The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that supervisors meet these requirements.

A.5.5. SUPERVISORS OPERATING A SUPPORT CRAFT OR SAFETY CRAFT

The Department Teacher-in-charge must refer to requirements within the relevant activity specific document/s, that address the qualifications, experience and competencies necessary to operate a safety craft.

A.6. SUPERVISION STRATEGIES

A.6.1. STRATEGIES

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that supervision strategies in place for the activity, promote the safety and wellbeing of students at all times and take into account the:

- purpose and type of the proposed activity
- number of students involved and the dynamics of the student cohort
- capacity of the students including adjustments for students with a disability or impairment, and alternative activities for students who are unable to participate
- students' medical conditions
- competence, experience, qualifications and skills of all supervisors
- nature and location of the environment
- previous, current and predicted weather conditions
- circumstances where students are not in the line of sight of the supervisor/s
- risks associated with activities in close proximity to water and whether the *Swimming and Water Based Activities* requirements apply
- potential risks that might occur if other schools or user groups are using the same venue (for example, the nature and number of those groups, and supervisory strategies for dealing with any risks that might arise from that situation)
- opportunities to use buddy system practices wherever possible.

Where groups of students need to be divided into subgroups, and several subgroups are completing activities independently, each sub-group must meet the mandated minimum supervision requirements.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that adequate supervision is provided to all students under their duty of care, including non-participants. The relevant activity specific supervision ratios apply.

Guidance

A buddy system is when two students are assigned to continuously monitor each others welfare throughout an activity.

When dividing students into subgroups, consideration should be given to the inclusion of an additional Qualified Supervisor, to enhance learning and communication across groups, and to offer expertise and support in the event of a rescue or other incident.

A.6.2. IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS DURING AN ACTIVITY

The Department Teacher-in-charge must establish a system that identifies all students during an activity.

Guidance

Identification systems may include (as relevant to the activity):

- *wearing school shirts, uniforms or brightly coloured/high visibility clothing*
- *wearing specially marked helmets that meet the relevant Australian Standard (for example, horse riding, abseiling, caving and/or canoeing activities)*
- *vests, sashes, hats, armbands, name tags, stickers or reflective tape*
- *placing colours and markings on life jackets*
- *using clearly identifiable craft (canoes, kayaks, yacht sail markings)*
- *confining students to designated areas that are not being used by other schools or members of the public.*

Identification systems can be used in combination.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must recognise the potential for weather conditions to change rapidly and ensure that student equipment and clothing remain highly visible in adverse weather conditions.

A.6.3. COMMUNICATION

An appropriate communication strategy must be established by the Department Teacher-in-charge that enables communication between groups, supervisory teams and students. These may include mobile phones, air horns, whistles, the scheduling of regular group meetings or specific meeting points.

The communication strategy needs to be explained to all students and should clearly identify:

- a signal for gaining the full group's attention
- an emergency signal and response that has been rehearsed prior to the commencement of the activity
- an alternative mode of communication should the primary communication method be unavailable
- communication to emergency support/support services.

Mobile telephones should not be relied on as the sole method of communication. In remote and rural locations, consideration is to be given to other means of communication such as an emergency position indicating radio beacon (EPIRB), a satellite telephone, or a pre-determined schedule of check-ins with a nominated contact at the school.

All communication equipment (whistles, phones, two-way radios etc) provided to supervisory team must be waterproofed and secured.

Where appropriate, and particularly in isolated areas, details of the proposed activity are to be left with a suitable authority (for example the local police, a Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions ranger, land manager or responsible community member).

Guidance

Modes of communication, as relevant to the activity, may include:

- *radio, mobile phone or satellite phone, in working order*
- *standard calls or signals commonly associated with a particular activity (e.g. paddle signals, standard climbing calls, car horns, pennants, semaphore, lights, UHF or VHF radio, flares or flags)*
- *alternative methods for students with disability, special education needs or who are culturally and linguistically diverse*
- *hand signals or visual aids*
- *sirens or whistle signals, eg:*
 - *one blast = stop, look and listen*

- three long blasts = the activity has finished
- continuous blasts in succession, with arms waved above the head = emergency; clear the activity immediately (the Australian distress signal is a series of three signals repeated at regular intervals).

While all communication modes can assist in the activation of an emergency response, consideration should be given to the limitations of each mode. Mobile telephones, for example, should not be relied on as the sole method of communication. Other modes may include satellite telephone or radio.

A.7. BRIEFING STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that all students have been briefed about:

- the educational purpose (learning intentions) and the cooperative nature of the activity
- components of the activity (including skills required)
- standards of behaviour, including roles and responsibilities
- hazard identification and safety requirements
- buddy practices
- procedures to be followed if members of the party are overdue, or become lost or separated from the group
- physical boundaries marked for the activity
- communication signals to gain attention and request assistance
- emergency and evacuation procedures
- minimal impact principles for that location (Leave No Trace principles).

In addition to the above, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team have been briefed about the following:

- the role and location of supervisors
- maintaining supervision ratios, including those for students not involved in the activity
- modified activity requirements for students with a disability or impairment
- the system for identifying students and supervisors
- student-specific medical requirements
- conditions associated with hypothermia, sunburn and dehydration
- communication strategies that will be used throughout the activity, including designated signals to gain the attention of the whole group, and to identify when emergency assistance is required
- location of first aid kit/s and emergency/rescue equipment
- appropriate clothing for the activity and weather conditions, including thermal and sun protection
- aspects of the environment and expected weather conditions.

Special information sessions must be arranged for students or staff absent from preparatory briefings.

Some activities, such as SCUBA diving, require all members of the group to participate in pre-activity planning sessions, as well as an post-activity debrief.

Changing conditions during an activity may make it necessary for the Department Teacher-in-charge to re-brief students and supervisors.

A.8. TRANSPORT

For information on transport arrangements for excursions refer to the *Excursions in Public Schools Procedures.*

A.9. LOCATION AND VENUES

To assist with assessing the suitability of the venue, sources of information may include:

- venue staff, landowner
- supervisors with previous experience of the location or venue
- traditional owners, knowledge holders, Elders and local Aboriginal community members
- a visit to the venue
- the Education Regional Office closest to the venue(s)
- Department of Fire and Emergency Services or the local police
- the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions or the local land manager
- other school staff that have visited the venue within the last six months
- an external provider or tour organiser.

Activities in high-risk bush fire areas must be avoided (refer to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services website or contact the local shire, as part of an environmental check). If conducting activities in the fire restriction season, the Department Teacher-in-charge must identify evacuation routes and confirm that the group has access to up-to-date fire information via radio, mobile or satellite phones during the activity.

For sites that have access restrictions, written permission must be gained from the relevant authority, such as the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions regional office, local land management body, lease holders or private property owners.

A.10. EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

A.10.1. WHERE AN EXTERNAL PROVIDER IS ENGAGED

The Department Teacher-in-charge must obtain copies of the documentation from the External Provider, outlined in Appendix D: External Provider checklist. These documents must be included in the submission for approval by the site manager.

The external provider must provide evidence of sufficient and current public liability insurance and professional indemnity insurance.

Duty of care for students cannot be completely delegated when an external provider is used, unless they are an Approved Provider.

The respective roles and responsibilities of supervisory team members and external provider staff must be clearly established and documented prior to commencing the activity.

The external provider must be informed that the consumption of illicit drugs and alcohol is prohibited and that consuming medication that may impair judgement during any school activity or excursion by any participant (staff, students, volunteers, external providers or supervisory team members) is prohibited. Refer to Appendix D: External Provider Checklist.

Any adult involved in activities with students must have a current *Working with Children Check* in accordance with the Department's Working with Children Checks in Department of Education Sites policy.

A.10.2. WAIVERS, INDEMNITIES AND DISCLAIMERS

Where activities involve the services of external providers, individuals, government agencies or private companies, Department staff **must not** sign indemnities, disclaimers, waivers or other documents which absolve the external provider from liability for their own negligent acts or omissions or require volunteers, parents or students over the age of 18 years to sign such documents. The Department Teacher-in-charge must be aware that disclaimers or waivers may be obscured within certain terms and conditions of entry.

Further information on waivers is available from legal services, by email **legalservices@education.wa.edu.au**.

A.10.3. INSURANCE COVER FOR EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

External providers must have a minimum of \$20 million public liability insurance cover and, if appropriate, a minimum of \$5 million professional liability insurance cover.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must obtain a copy of the external provider's certificate of currency and attach it to all submissions for approval (refer Appendix D: External Provider checklist).

Specific accident cover is provided by the Department's insurer for personal injuries when on excursions involving an overnight stay.

Further information on insurance is available from legal services, by email **legalservices@education.wa.edu.au**.

A.11. EQUIPMENT

Equipment specific advice can be found in the relevant activity specific documents. The Qualified Supervisor must:

- complete a visual and physical safety check of all equipment prior to commencing the activity (as well as at critical times throughout the activity) to confirm that the equipment is appropriate, safe and in working order
- have current and accurate maintenance and inspection records that comply with the manufacturer's maintenance instructions and relevant Australian Standards
- conduct briefings about the correct use of equipment. This must be completed with supervisors and students prior to the commencement of any activity.

Emergency equipment, as appropriate for the activity (for example, a whistle, life jacket, back-up vehicle, support or safety craft, wave ski, rescue tube or board) must be in a readily accessible location throughout the duration of the activity.

Where a powered support or safety craft is used, the craft must comply with Department of Transport marine safety requirements.

Communication equipment appropriate, for the activity, location and duration of the activity must be readily accessible (*refer to A.6.3. Communication*).

First aid equipment must be readily accessible and must include items appropriate to the activity, location, size and needs of the group and duration of the activity.

Guidance***First aid equipment and first aid kit/s***

Recommendations for first aid equipment (including first aid kit/s) can be accessed from Ikon (Manage first aid supplies and equipment). The list includes the requirement for an appropriate number of, adrenaline auto-injector devices and inhalers for the emergency treatment of asthma.

As the Guidelines contain a suggested list of contents only, schools will need to modify quantities and contents at their discretion, to suit the activity, the duration of the activity, the numbers in the group and the location.

Anaphylaxis and asthma

Principals can arrange a demonstration on how to administer medication in anaphylaxis and asthma emergencies. The Department provides an online anaphylaxis training course available through [Ikon](#).

Students at risk of anaphylaxis should have their health care plan and adrenaline auto-injector available at all times.

For information about first aid qualification requirements, refer to A.5.3. First Aid Qualification.

Additional first aid equipment (for example, trauma dressings, compression bandages, formable splints, thermal blankets or other specialised equipment) may be required in accordance with the activities to be undertaken, the location (remote or metropolitan, land, sea) and the level of first aid training available to the group.

A useful site to review is: [Australian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy \(ASCIA\)](#).

A useful reference for first aid equipment, first aid kit/s and first aid information related to staff rather than students is [Worksafe WA](#) or the [Safe Work Australia First Aid in the Workplace Code of Practice](#).

Concussion

Signs and symptoms of concussion and what to do if a concussion is suspected, can be found on the [‘Supporting students with concussion’ Ikon service](#) and the [Healthdirect website](#).

A.12. WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECKS (EXTERNAL PROVIDERS)

The Department Teacher-in-charge must verify that all external providers working with students have a Working with Children Check, in accordance with the [Working with Children Checks in Department of Education Sites](#) policy.

A.12.1. VOLUNTEERS WHO ARE EXEMPT FROM HAVING A WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK

Volunteers assisting an external provider who are exempt from having a Working with Children Check are requested to complete a Confidential Declaration Form (see Appendix C of the [Visitors and Intruders on Public School Premises Policy](#)) indicating any convictions or whether there are circumstances or reasons that might preclude them from working with or near children. Exemptions from Working with Children Checks do not apply for overnight camps, billeting and/or hostel arrangements.

In line with the Department's [Criminal History Screening for Department of Education Sites Policy](#), the decision as to whether or not volunteers assisting an external provider in on-school site or off-school site activities are required to consent to criminal history screening processes is a judgement made by the site manager. In making this decision, the site manager should consider the factors listed in that policy.

A.13. RISK ASSESSMENT

A completed risk assessment provides information for the relevant excursion proposal and is an essential part of planning any recreation or outdoor education activity. The Department Teacher-in-charge must refer to [Appendix B: Risk Management Plan](#) and identify the hazards and assess the risks that the recreation and/or outdoor education activity may pose to the safety, health or wellbeing of any student or member of the supervisory team, and propose strategies for minimising and managing those risks.

The risk assessment documents potential hazards and risks associated with the proposed activities. It should include, but is not limited to, management plans for foreseeable incidents, and must consider:

- the number of students, their age range, their attendance at relevant training sessions or courses, their physical capacity, their current and prior medical conditions and behaviour
- the venue and any potential hazards and risks associated with the recreation and outdoor education activities
- the method of transport to the venue and all activities at the venue
- issues that might arise due to the duration of the activity and/or possible weather events that could impact student participation
- any student disability or impairment that may need to be managed
- any special clothing or other items that may be needed during an activity by students and supervisors
- any applicable minimum age, height and/or weight restrictions associated with the activity.

A risk assessment must be developed in conjunction with Appendix A: General Requirements and the relevant activity specific document and will inform any increase in the supervision ratios and qualification requirements (beyond the minimum mandated) for the duration of the recreation and/or outdoor education activity.

The Department Teacher-in-charge obtains information about, and familiarises themselves with, the venue before undertaking the activity. This determines the suitability of the venue and proposed activities, allows for a check of safety procedures and provides an opportunity to investigate details such as mobile phone coverage and access to emergency services. It is acceptable to use information from other sources such as Department staff who have previously delivered similar activities at the venue. At least one member of the supervisory team must have current knowledge of the site.

Dynamic risk assessments must continue throughout the proposed activity, as conditions can change rapidly.

A.14. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

A.14.1. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN REQUIREMENTS

The Department Teacher-in-charge confirms that the risk management plan:

- identifies all foreseeable hazards and risks associated with the activity
- determines suitable risk mitigation strategies
- to minimise or eliminate those risks.

Appendix B: Risk Management Plan must be included in the documentation taken on the activity. The Department Teacher-in-charge must brief staff and students on the risk mitigation strategies in the Risk Management Plan. A copy of the plan must also be retained by the Department Site Manager.

A.14.2. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN REQUIREMENTS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must prepare an emergency response plan confirming that all students and members of the supervisory team will have access to emergency support (refer to Appendix C: Emergency Response Plan).

Appendix C: Emergency Response Plan must be included in the documentation taken on the activity. The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm with members of the supervisory team, their roles and responsibilities allocated in the *Emergency Response Plan* prior to the commencement of the planned activity. A copy of the plan must also be retained by the Department Site Manager.

The Emergency Response Plan must document strategies to manage minor and major injuries, illnesses and/or other foreseeable incidents/crises, including:

- prioritising and allocating tasks in an emergency
- emergency contact details
- the parameters for seeking external support
- notification of the police, Department Site Manager, office of the external provider (which may have its own procedures to follow).

The Emergency Response Plan must include:

- the name of the Department Teacher-in-charge and method of contact
- a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of next of kin contacts for all students and supervisors
- the first aid qualifications, skills and experience of supervisors
- the name and address of the venue, external provider and all relevant contact details
- an evacuation plan and the name of the supervisor who will manage the evacuation
- a map of the area(s) to be used showing the location of the assembly point, nearest telephone, land manager, first aid and emergency services, ranger's residence, hospital, State Emergency Service office, police, nursing station or any other relevant information or services
- proposed and alternative travel routes, the estimated times of departure and arrival
- transport details: including the number, type and registration number of vehicle/s; and access details (i.e. by foot, 2 or 4-wheel drive), including consideration such as supervisors capacity to drive particular types of vehicles
- a list of resources/equipment the group is travelling with (for example, first aid kit/s, communication equipment, number of staff (including external providers) with first aid qualifications, stretchers and other camping or activity-specific equipment)
- details of support crafts (if relevant), the coastal area codes involved and proposed route
- an estimate of the time it might take to raise an alarm, and the amount of time that might elapse before appropriate support could be provided
- the availability of a support safety vehicle or craft in the event of an emergency.

A.14.3. DETAILS OF STUDENTS' HEALTH OR MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

All relevant health information is incorporated into the emergency response plan or attached, with the plan, to the proposal for excursion form (*Excursions in Public Schools Procedures*).

For the duration of the activity, the Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure that they, or a nominated supervisor, has access to:

- Student Health Forms and Health Care Plans of those students known to have particular health or medical requirements
- the medical details of the supervisory team members
- the required medication for specific students and supervisors, directions for use for those medications and storage arrangements.

A.14.4. NOTIFYING EXTERNAL SUPPORT SERVICES IN AN EMERGENCY

Parameters for seeking external support should be documented in *Appendix C: Emergency Response Plan*.

Delaying the implementation of the emergency response plan is only permitted if the supervisory team is confident that no imminent danger exists and that there is a reasonable expectation that the emergency will soon be resolved. Should this occur, an interim course of action and a time to review the situation is agreed upon within the supervisory team before assistance is sought.

Guidance

Parameters for seeking external support include, but are not limited to, the identification of pre-determined triggers for seeking external support services and when they will be enacted. Information gathered at the site will inform future actions and responses.

A.14.5. EMERGENCY AND FIRST AID EQUIPMENT

Emergency equipment relevant to the activity, environment, location, size of the group and duration of the activity, must be readily accessible (refer to section A.11. *Equipment*).

Appropriate first aid equipment must be readily accessible. The first aid kit/s must include items that are appropriate to the activity, environment, size of the group and duration of the activity (refer to section A.11. *Equipment*).

A.14.6. DETAILED COSTS

All recreation and outdoor education activities are fully costed so students can be appropriately charged, where relevant.

Guidance

To comply with the Department's Accounting Procedures, schools are encouraged to access information on Ikon: [Price School Camps and Excursions](#).

A.15. APPROVALS AND INFORMED CONSENT**A.15.1. PARK MANAGER, LANDOWNERS OR VENUE MANAGERS**

All approvals must be obtained from relevant park managers, land owners or venue managers prior to commencing the activity (refer to the [Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions](#) website for its permission forms).

A.15.2. PARENTAL INFORMATION AND CONSENT

The Department Teacher-in-charge must:

- provide detailed information to parents and carers so they can make an informed decision about their child's participation in the activity
- provide a course outline to parents or carers, if the activities are part of a course
- record all information provided to parents or carers.

Information provided to parents and carers includes (as relevant to the activity):

- the educational purpose of the activity
- the nature and details of the activity (date, location, duration and start/finish times)
- the mode of travel, travel arrangements and related safety considerations (seatbelts)
- detailed costs
- the student contact arrangements during the activity
- the proposed supervision strategy and qualifications of the supervisory team
- staff action in the case of a student accident or illness
- information regarding liability for loss or damage to student property and/or medical costs incurred in the event of accident or illness
- a list of special clothing or other items required for the activity.

Students can only engage in activities for which written parent or carer approval (including signature/s) has been obtained.

For local (intrastate) or interstate activities:

- parents, guardians or carers sign the local/interstate parent information and consent form located in the Department's Excursions in Public Schools Procedures and return the completed document to the school prior to the planned activity.

For international activities:

- Parents, guardians or carers sign the International Excursion Parent Information and Consent to Participate form located in the Department's Excursions in Public Schools Procedures and return the completed document to the school prior to the planned activity.

Guidance

Parents, guardians or carers of Aboriginal students and/or those from culturally and linguistically diverse communities may require additional support in understanding communications and providing consent. This may require access to an interpreter, translator service or in some cases, assistance from a relevant staff member.

Consent for recurring activities that are part of a longer program can be obtained (with the approval of the Department Site Manager) at the commencement of the program.

APPENDIX B. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

A Risk Management Plan must be prepared for all on-site and off-site recreation and outdoor education activities. For off-site activities, the Risk Management Plans must be submitted with the relevant excursion approval request and the school principal is the Excursion Approval Authority.

Risk Management Plans must not be generic. They must be specific to the location, student cohort, environment and activities proposed.

Section 1: The Activity																			
Name of activity:					Start time:				Start date:										
Location/ venue address and contact details:					Finish time:				Finish date:										
Brief description of activity/activities																			
Year groups involved:				Total number of students:				Male:				Female:				X (other):			
Teacher-in-charge:				Experience/Qualifications:		<list experience and qualifications directly related to intended activities and location, (including first aid/aquatic rescues and applicable licences etc).>													
Supervisory team member(s):				Experience/Qualifications:															
Vehicle(s)/vessel(s) make, models and registration numbers																			
Section 2: Purpose																			
Educational purpose of the activity:																			

Section 3: Risk Rating Matrix									
Risk rating		Consequences					Likelihood	Almost certain	Expected to occur in most circumstances.
		Insignificant	Minor	Moderate	Major	Critical		Likely	High probability of occurring.
Possible	May occur at some point in time.								
Likelihood	Almost certain	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme		Unlikely	Unlikely to occur but could happen.
	Likely	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme	Extreme		Rare	Occurs infrequently.
								Insignificant	No injuries with no impact on activity.
								Minor	Basic first aid treatment required (onsite), limited impact on activity
							Moderate	Medical treatment required with disruption or delays to activity.	
Possible	Low	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme	Major	Serious injury requiring specialist treatment or hospitalisation. Major delay or suspension of activity is likely to occur.		
Unlikely	Low	Low	Medium	High	High	Critical	Permanent or serious injuries sustained. Activity is immediately suspended.		
Rare	Low	Low	Low	Medium	High				

Risk Rating Levels, Descriptors and Prescribed Actions		
Level	Description of risk rating	Actions
Low	If an incident were to occur, it is rare or unlikely to disrupt the activity or result in an injury to the students.	Activity is acceptable if monitored using existing management strategies.
Medium	If an incident were to occur, there is the possibility of disruption or delay to the activity and/or an injury to participant(s) requiring medical treatment.	Additional risk management strategies may be required prior to engaging in the activity.
High	If an incident were to occur, it is likely to cause major delays or cancellation of the activity and/or is likely to result in students requiring specialist treatment or hospitalisation.	Additional risk management strategies are required prior to engaging in the activity.
Extreme	If an incident were to occur, it would result in immediate cancellation of the activity and/or is likely to result in permanent or serious injuries to the participant(s).	Alternative activities should be considered or significant risk management strategies must be implemented to ensure safety.

Section 4: Risk Assessment: These examples are provided as a guide and are not intended as an exhaustive list. The Department Teacher-in-charge is responsible for ensuring adequate and current risk assessments are completed prior to engaging in any recreation or outdoor education activity.			
Hazards may include but are not limited to:	Risks may include but are not limited to anything relevant to:	Causal factors may include but are not limited to:	Strategies to reduce risks may include but are not limited to:
• Familiarity with environment • Students' physical/mental capacity and skill sets • Group size • Personal attitudes • Existing medical conditions • Exposure • Extreme weather • Wildlife and flora • Terrain (trails, landscapes etc) • Aquatic environments • Vehicles • Equipment (lifespan, incorrect equipment, missing/forgotten etc.)	• Individual/group becomes separated/ lost • Exacerbation of existing/prior medical condition • Hypothermia/hyperthermia. • Falls from heights • Physical injuries (including but not limited to fractures, abrasions, bites and stings, shock, conditions associated with extremes of weather etc) • Encounters with wildlife • Drowning • Fatigue • Unseasonal weather conditions • Bush fires • Physical/psychological capacity/limitations of students • Mechanical issues/failures (with vehicles, trailers and activity specific equipment) • Missing/forgotten equipment. • Terrain (Steep, loose, rocky, thick bush/scrub lands, water crossings, lack of vehicle access, unmarked trails) • Inexperience • Negative/inappropriate personal behaviours of individuals placing others/self at risk • Poor group management	• Students' inadequate skill sets for desired activity including but not limited to swimming and navigation abilities • Ineffective supervision • Inadequate briefings • Fear • Fatigue • Terrain • Poor prior planning/research (weather, environment, nutrition, lack of personal familiarity) • Inappropriate equipment (outdated PPE, shelter, activity specific, personal equipment for climate e.g. clothing, sleeping etc) • Incorrect use of equipment • Poor maintenance of equipment • Inexperience • Poor knowledge of local environment • Complacency • Lack of appropriate first aid equipment/ medication and/or experience in administering first aid • Recent/prior medical conditions/ environmental triggers • Lack of clearly established rules • Unexpected unseasonal weather • Weather/exposure (lack of shelter, heat, cold, wet, windy) • Activities scheduled for middle of the day • Disturbing/approaching wildlife • Participation in skill development sessions	• Thorough briefings • Consent forms (including current medical information) • Information letters (includes who, when, where, why, equipment list) • Experienced/qualified supervisors • Effective supervision • Accurate current knowledge of environment and specific location • Selection of activity/environment to suit capacity of students • Monitor weather (cancel/reschedule as required) • Plan activities to avoid any location of known risks • Regular maintenance and/or logs for equipment use • Check all equipment directly prior to use • Spare/replacement equipment readily available • Carry comprehensive first aid kit/s suitable for desired activity and students • Where possible, avoid known environmental triggers for medical conditions • Buddy checks • Monitor and cancel, reschedule, or change locations as required • Establish signals/communication techniques

The Department Teacher-in-charge must assess each risk that the recreation or outdoor education activity may pose to the safety, health or wellbeing of any student or supervisory team member and propose strategies for minimising and managing those risks (see General Requirements A.13 and A.14).

Requirements A1.6 and A1.7:

Risk Assessment Example							
1. Camping This risk assessment template example is not intended as an exhaustive list. This example identifies one hazard, associated risks, causal factors and strategies to reduce or remove risk.							
Hazards	Risk	Causal factors		Risk rating	Strategies to reduce or remove risk	Who is responsible and by when? (Duty of Care cannot be delegated to camp provider)	Residual risk rating
Prior medical conditions	Exacerbation of existing/prior medical condition	People	- Poor maintenance of medical condition. - Recent prior medical incidents.	High	- Obtain current consent form with updates to any medical conditions. - Carry a copy of students' current medical action plan. - Ensure supervisors are aware of medical conditions - Participant is monitored. - Supervisors have relevant qualifications and are able to administer effective first aid if required. - Discuss management plan with participant.	- Department Teacher-in-charge (DTIC) is responsible for obtaining current consent and medical update prior to activity commencement. - DTIC to brief supervisors on relevant medical conditions and ensure supervisory team has skill set to administer effective first aid when/if required. - DTIC to ensure participant is monitored by designated supervisors throughout activity. - DTIC to discuss management plan with participant.	Low
		Equipment	- Ineffective medication. - Unable to access medication.	High	- Ensure participant has appropriate medication in easy to access location and/or with them at all times. - Identify chief first aid supervisor and ensure first aid kit/s has relevant items and person qualified to administer.	- Each participant is responsible for ensuring they have required personal medication. DTIC is to confirm access to and administration of medications with participant and relevant supervisors prior to activity. - Chief first aid officer is to be identified and briefed prior to activity. They are to check first aid kit/s.	Low
		Environment	Exposure to trigger environments/ activities that increase risk of onset of medical condition.	High	Minimise/avoid exposure to trigger environments.	DTIC to consider and avoid seasons and times of day that can trigger known medical conditions when planning activities.	Moderate

Examples of other camping hazards could include fire risk, water proximity, prevailing weather conditions, ground instability or open flame cooking activities.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must assess each risk that the recreation or outdoor education activity may pose to the safety, health or wellbeing of any student or supervisory team member and propose strategies for minimising and managing those risks (see General Requirements A.13 and A.14).

Risk Assessment EXAMPLE						
2. Paddling: Primary school students Years K-6 The use of Stand-Up Paddle Boards are not permitted for primary school students Year K-6. All other K-6 paddling activities must only be conducted in swimming pools and calm water environments. This risk assessment template example is not intended as an exhaustive list. This example identifies one hazard, associated risks, causal factors and strategies to reduce or remove risk.						
Hazards	Risk	Causal factors		Risk rating	Strategies to reduce or remove risk	Who is responsible and by when?
Adverse change in weather conditions	Wind strength and direction	People • DTIC and/or supervisory team members have not monitored current weather conditions. • DTIC has not planned alternative activity delivery strategies for changing weather conditions. • Students do not have the skills, knowledge or experience to participate safely in the changing weather conditions.		High	• All supervisors meet the qualification requirements. • Students have been assessed and can demonstrate the paddling skills required to cope with various weather conditions. • Supervision strategies are appropriate for the location, nature of the environment and weather conditions. • Increase supervision ratios to meet predicted/actual weather conditions. • Planning for the activity includes modifications that are tailored to account for a range of weather conditions and student capacity. • Prior to the activity, brief the supervisory team on emergency response plan and the roles and responsibilities of supervisors. • Pre-activity briefing to identifying weather conditions to staff and students and methods of communication. • Rehearse communication processes with students and supervisory team that include paddle signals, hand signals, whistles, verbal cues and communication devices prior to the activity.	• DTIC confirms that the supervisory team has the qualifications, experience and competencies for this activity. • DTIC is responsible for assessing student capacity to meet the requirements of the current weather conditions. Assessment of predicted weather conditions prior to and on arrival. • DTIC to brief supervisors and students on any modifications to the activity required including distance from shore, boundaries and support craft requirements. This should include that supervision strategies continue to meet weather conditions. • DTIC to brief supervisory team on emergency response procedures and supervision strategies to ensure student safety prior to the activity. This should be repeated at the activity if modifications are required on arrival. • DTIC and supervisory team to brief and rehearse with students, in communication processes and signals in the event of adverse weather conditions, paddle craft capsize, fall from the craft or separation from the group. • DTIC and support craft operator communicate strategies to support the activity in the current and/or predicted conditions that include monitoring fatigue.
						Low

The Department Teacher-in-charge must assess each risk that the recreation or outdoor education activity may pose to the safety, health or wellbeing of any student or supervisory team member and propose strategies for minimising and managing those risks (see General Requirements A.13 and A.14).

					• Constant monitoring of students for fatigue and response to conditions.		
		Equipment	• Equipment failure • Lack of visibility • Hyperthermia/hypothermia	High	• Appropriate clothing for exposure to heat, wind and cold. • Provision of highly visible clothing and equipment by school or external provider. • Check equipment safety prior to activity commencing. • Communication equipment (whistles, phones, two-way radios etc) provided to the supervisory team must be waterproofed and secured. • Support craft are available at all times and are appropriate to affecting a rescue if required.	• DTIC communicates to parents prior to the activity to consider clothing choices appropriate for a range of conditions. • DTIC briefs support craft supervisor on activity and communication plans. • Each member of supervisory team is provided with communication equipment by DTIC at briefing. • Supervisory team to check and confirm the safety of all equipment (including student apparel) prior to commencement of activity. • Each member of the supervisory team confirms communication equipment is waterproof and secured.	Low/ Moderate
		Environment	• Exposure to increased wind strength resulting in increased swell and/or water chop.	High	• Continue to monitor wind speed and direction before the activity, on arrival and during the activity. • Decrease the distance that the students can travel from a safe landing point (the shore) and communicate the activity boundaries to the students and the supervisory team. • Brief and rehearse with the students and the supervisory team emergency responses and communication strategies. • Students demonstrate communication strategies.	• DTIC develops a clear communication plan for Principal approval including an Emergency Response Plan (Appendix C). • DTIC monitors weather conditions prior, on arrival and during the activity. • DTIC, in consultation with the supervisory team, modifies the activity as required and communicates modifications to students. • DTIC briefs supervisory team and students on relevant communication plan strategies and confirms their understanding (through demonstration).	Moderate

Examples of other Paddling activity hazards could include collision with other paddle craft, capsizing, injury (head or other minor injuries like hand blisters, cuts and grazes), submerged rocks and sun exposure.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must assess each risk that the recreation or outdoor education activity may pose to the safety, health or wellbeing of any student or supervisory team member and propose strategies for minimising and managing those risks (see General Requirements A.13 and A.14).

Risk Assessment EXAMPLE						
3. Paddling including Stand-Up Paddle Boards (SUPs): Secondary school students Years 7-12 This risk assessment template can be used to plan all paddling craft activities including SUPs. This is not intended as an exhaustive list. This example identifies one hazard, associated risks, causal factors and strategies to reduce or remove risk.						
Hazards	Risk	Causal factors	Risk rating	Strategies to reduce or remove risk	Who is responsible and by when?	Residual risk rating
<i>Capsizing; or falling from a SUP/paddle craft</i>	<i>Entrapment, injury, drowning, exposure, separation from craft</i>	People • <i>Weather conditions are unsuitable for the age and capacity of the students</i> • <i>DTIC and/or supervisory team members have not monitored current weather conditions</i> • <i>SUP's or other light paddle craft are unsuitable for the weather conditions.</i> • <i>Student behaviour/ actions on the SUP or in paddle craft (incorrect use of the equipment)</i> • <i>Students do not have the skills, knowledge or experience to participate safely in the paddle craft in current conditions.</i> • <i>Inadequate capsize briefing</i>	<i>High</i>	• <i>Risk Management Plan of contracted external provider has been sourced, reviewed and attached to planning documents for approval.</i> • <i>All supervisors meet the qualification requirements.</i> • <i>Supervision strategies meet student capacity, location, nature of the environment and weather conditions.</i> • <i>Students have previously demonstrated the required lead up skills for this activity and the type of paddle craft.</i> • <i>If students are using SUPs, they can demonstrate the required balance, single paddle technique and recovery skills prior to the commencement of the activity.</i> • <i>Students take part in a capsize or falling off (SUPs) briefing on land. Students then demonstrate in the water the appropriate recovery skills required for the type of craft being used.</i> • <i>In paddle craft that pose an entrapment risk (Group 2 Paddle craft) assess students to ensure they can demonstrate water recovery effectively.</i>	• <i>DTIC sources the risk management plans and emergency response plans of any external activity providers. Advice sought from Department policy contact regarding suitability if required.</i> • <i>DTIC confirms that the supervisory team has the mandated qualifications, experience and competencies for this activity and the paddle craft being used.</i> • <i>DTIC confirms Principal approval for the activity that includes all required planning documentation including a risk management plan and emergency response plan.</i> • <i>DTIC is responsible for confirming student capacity to meet the requirements of the current conditions (including lead up paddling skills and capsize or fall recovery).</i> • <i>DTIC and supervisory team to confirm students can demonstrate skills specifically relating to SUPs prior to the activity.</i> • <i>DTIC to brief supervisory team on emergency response procedures and supervision strategies to ensure the safety of all students including incidences where students capsize or fall from craft.</i> • <i>Assessment of predicted weather conditions prior to and on arrival.</i>	<i>Low</i>

The Department Teacher-in-charge must assess each risk that the recreation or outdoor education activity may pose to the safety, health or wellbeing of any student or supervisory team member and propose strategies for minimising and managing those risks (see General Requirements A.13 and A.14).

			prior to activity commencement.		• The activity is modified or tailored to account for current weather conditions and student capacity. • Establish clear communication processes with students and supervisors that include paddle signals, hand signals, whistles, verbal cues and communication devices that have been rehearsed prior to the activity. • Pre-activity briefing identifies supervisor and student methods to communicate if a student falls from a SUP or paddle craft is separated from the group. • Supervisors maintain a close distance between craft to closely supervise a student who has fallen from a SUP or capsized from a paddle craft. • Constant monitoring of students for fatigue. This may be as a result of 'righting' a paddle craft or climbing back onto a SUP. • Use a buddy system (at least 2 paddle craft remaining together). Consider weaker students buddying with stronger students.	• DTIC and supervisory team members are briefed about supervision procedures and any modifications in response to weather condition AND when a member is attending a student capsize or fall from craft. • DTIC to brief supervisory team on the Emergency Response Plan roles when a student has incurred a minor or major injury or incident. • DTIC to brief and rehearse with students and supervisors on communication processes and signals in the event of a paddle craft capsize or a fall from a SUP. • DTIC oversees the supervisory team buddying students together (considering the capacity of the students) prior to entering the water.	
		Equipment	• Equipment damage or failure • Deteriorating weather conditions • Hypothermia • Lack of visibility of a student in the water	High	• Highly visible clothing and equipment • Appropriate clothing for exposure to wind and cold. • Support craft available at all times and appropriate to affecting a rescue (where required). • Check equipment safety prior to activity commencing. • Communication equipment (whistles, phones, two-way radios etc)	• DTIC communicates to parents prior to the activity to ensure students wear appropriate clothing. • DTIC and supervisory team members ensure each student is correctly attired with highly visible clothing. • DTIC briefs support craft supervisor/s on activity and communication plans. • Supervisory team to check and confirm safety of all equipment (including student	Low/ Moderate

The Department Teacher-in-charge must assess each risk that the recreation or outdoor education activity may pose to the safety, health or wellbeing of any student or supervisory team member and propose strategies for minimising and managing those risks (see General Requirements A.13 and A.14).

					<i>provided to supervisory team must be waterproofed and secured.</i> • <i>Ensure students on a SUP have leg rope correctly attached.</i>	<i>apparel) prior to commencement of activity.</i> • <i>Each member of supervisory team is provided with communication equipment by DTIC at briefing.</i>	
		Environment	• <i>SUP's or other light paddle craft are unsuitable for the weather conditions.</i> • <i>Current, swell or wind may cause student to drift and become separated from craft.</i> • <i>Exposure to cold and hypothermia</i> • <i>Water conditions: wind, waves, swell, other craft.</i>	High	• <i>Plan alternative activities for changing weather conditions.</i> • <i>Communicate to students and parents prior to the activity the requirement for appropriate clothing.</i> • <i>Set clear boundaries for the activity and support craft to monitor.</i> • <i>Establish clear communication processes with students and supervisors, that include paddle signals, hand signals, whistles, verbal cues and communication devices that have been rehearsed prior to the activity</i> • <i>If using SUPs brief students on strategies to reduce fatigue e.g. sitting or kneeling on board to paddle (lower the centre of gravity).</i> • <i>Continue to monitor wind speed and direction prior to the activity, on arrival and during the activity.</i> • <i>Decrease the distance that the students can travel from a safe landing point.</i>	• <i>DTIC communicates to parents prior to the activity to consider clothing choices appropriate for range of conditions.</i> • <i>DTIC monitors weather conditions prior, on arrival and during the activity.</i> • <i>DTIC in consultation with the supervisory team modifies the activity as required.</i> • <i>DTIC briefs supervisory team and students on relevant communication plan strategies.</i>	Moderate

APPENDIX C. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Section 5: Emergency Response Plan			
Emergency contacts			
Emergency services	Emergency and local phone numbers	Address/Location	Access within 1 hour by road/air.
Ambulance			Yes/No
Hospital			Yes/No
Medical centre			Yes/No
Police	urgent 000, non-urgent 131 444		Yes/No
Fire			Yes/No
Poisons information	131126		Yes/No
Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions			Yes/No
Landowners			Yes/No
School			
Students' emergency contact details	Copy of consent forms to be retained by the Department Teacher-in-charge. Include current emergency contact details for all students' next of kin.		
Section 6: Maps			
Include/attach a copy of relevant area maps, highlighting (where applicable): • support vehicle/bus access locations and evacuation routes including identification of any unsigned access roads • emergency access points and any potentially locked gates • land manager/ranger residence • participant expected locations/trails/routes/campsites/emergency assembly points • nearest main town/settlement • areas of mobile phone coverage/service access • location of first aid kit/s • directions and localities of nearest emergency services (Fire, Police, medical centres and/or hospitals with 24-hour emergency access etc.).			

The Department Teacher-in-charge must assess each risk that the recreation or outdoor education activity may pose to the safety, health or wellbeing of any student or supervisory team member and propose strategies for minimising and managing those risks (see General Requirements A.13 and A.14).

Section 7: Emergency Evacuation Plan

Provide a detailed evacuation plan for all students. This must include a secondary exit strategy.

Section 8: Equipment

Vehicles and keys	<insert location of vehicles, keys, who has access, who has relevant licences to operate >
First aid kit/s	<insert location of first aid and emergency rescue kit/s, who is trained in administering first aid and effecting rescue>
Communications	<insert details of relevant communication plan >
Participant equipment list	<insert list of equipment students are expected to have for proposed activity/activities>
Group equipment list	< insert list of additional equipment supplied for the group>

Section 9: Emergency Response Plan

Responsibilities of supervisory team	In the event of an emergency the division of responsibility will be partly determined by <insert any site or activity specific issues>. In the case of a emergency, when an alarm has been raised, all activities will cease..		
	Role	Name and contact details	Responsibilities/role description (Supervisors to be briefed prior to commencement of activity)
	Department Teacher-in-charge		
	Second-in-charge		
	First Aid Officer		
	Group Manager		
	Communications Officer		
	Additional Supervisors		
1. Take control/secure the scene		- In the event of an emergency the Emergency Response Plan is enacted. - The Department Teacher-in-charge (or if they are incapacitated the second-in-charge) must secure the scene and ensure the safety of all students. - Instructions must be given in a calm and methodical manner.	

The Department Teacher-in-charge must assess each risk that the recreation or outdoor education activity may pose to the safety, health or wellbeing of any student or supervisory team member and propose strategies for minimising and managing those risks (see General Requirements A.13 and A.14).

2. Primary survey Follow DRSABCD	<i>Inform concerned authorities as soon as practical.</i> Danger - to yourself, others/bystanders, casualty. Stop and survey the scene. Response <u>Conscious</u>: place casualty in recovery position if no spinal injury is suspected and proceed to secondary survey. Continue to monitor. <u>Unconscious</u>: continue with DRSABCD. Send for help 000. Inform authorities as soon as practical (include: location, crossroad/access, number of casualties, condition of casualties, contact number). If possible, delegate this responsibility to a trusted bystander. Airway - look, listen, feel, visual check of oral cavity. Remove any visual blockage. Breathing <u>Breathing</u> check: frequency, depth, regularity, sounds, smell. If normal, place casualty in recovery position. If gurgling sound is present, clear airways and check chest for injury. <u>Not breathing</u>: continue with DRSABCD and commence cardio pulmonary resuscitation (CPR). CPR 30 chest compressions (1/3 depth of chest): 2 breaths. (Approximately 3 full cycles per minute). - Continue CPR until help arrives or the patient starts breathing. If breathing place in recovery position. Defibrillation - Attach as soon as one is available and follow voice prompts. DO NOT move a patient with a suspected spinal injury unless they are in danger. If the patient must be moved, take extreme care to keep the spine straight and avoid twisting or bending. Support head and neck with your hands.
3. Secondary survey	For non-urgent matters, refer to emergency contact numbers for local police/hospital/school as required. Shock: Monitor for shock by checking vital signs: - Loss of consciousness (restless, disoriented) - Heart rate (rapid and weak) - Respiratory rate (rapid and shallow) - Skin colour, temperature, moisture (pale, cold and clammy) - Pupils (slow to respond) Head to toe survey Ask about any possible injuries and suspected locations, level of pain out of 10. Look for changes to facial expressions during survey, bruises, wounds, bleeding, deformities and signs of vomiting Feel for hot or cold spots, rigidity, tenderness, deformity

The Department Teacher-in-charge must assess each risk that the recreation or outdoor education activity may pose to the safety, health or wellbeing of any student or supervisory team member and propose strategies for minimising and managing those risks (see General Requirements A.13 and A.14).

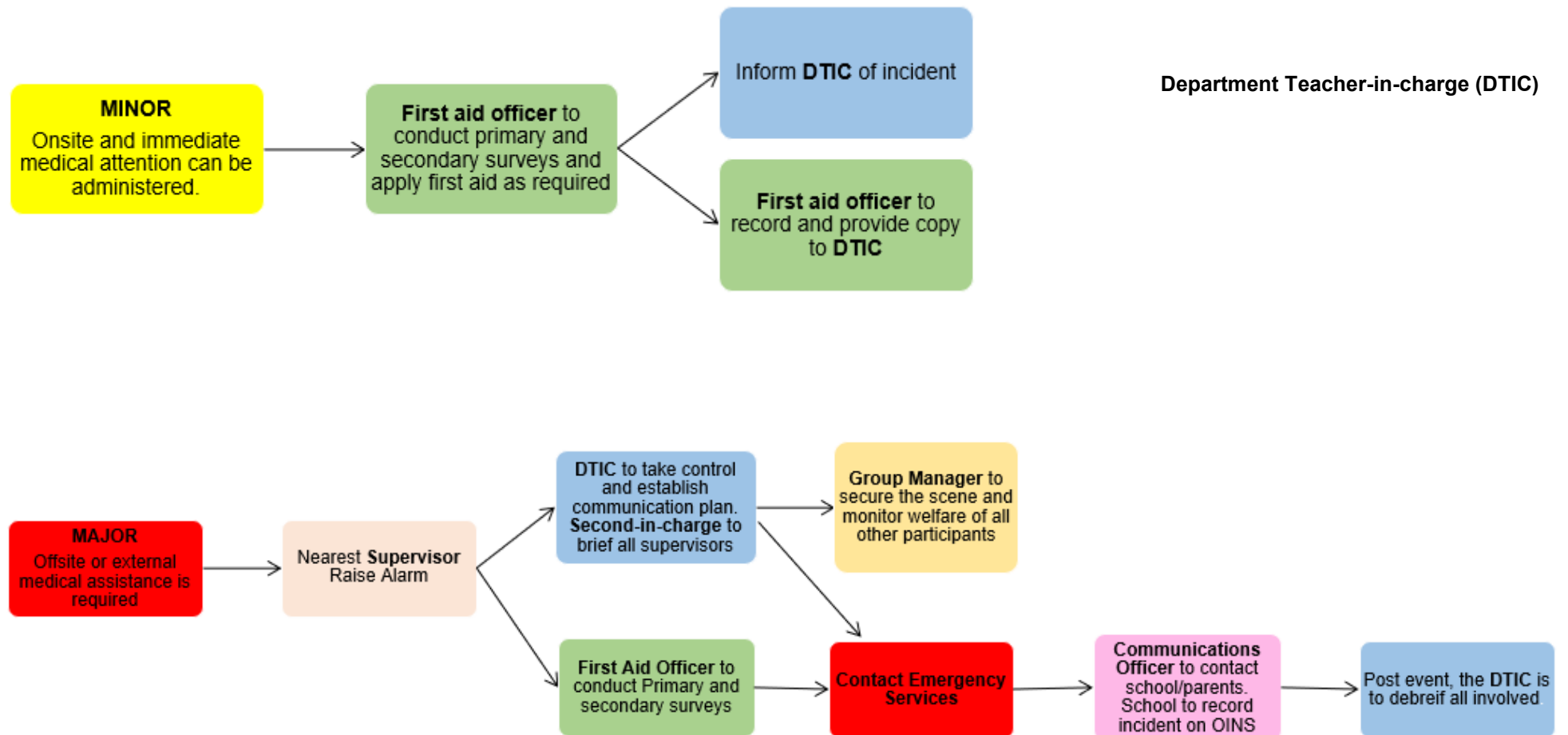
	• Listen for abnormal sounds, bones grating, airway noises, chest gurgling • Smell for unusual body odours, breath odours or external odours from environment Medical history Ask about: • prior and current symptoms • allergies • medications • relevant medical history • recent foods and fluids • events preceding the incident/illness. Exposure: Seek shade, padding, insulation and shelter to reduce casualty exposure
4. Aftercare	Make casualty comfortable and reassure. Use other staff members to supervise the rest of the group. When appropriate keep the group informed of the casualty's condition.
5. Documents and reporting	All accidents/incidents and near misses must be recorded with the Principal of your school. All major accidents/incidents and/or near misses must be reported through the Online Incident Notification System (OINS).

Management Flow Charts: If applicable, flow charts should include an estimated time it may take to raise an alarm and the amount of time that may elapse before appropriate support can be provided.

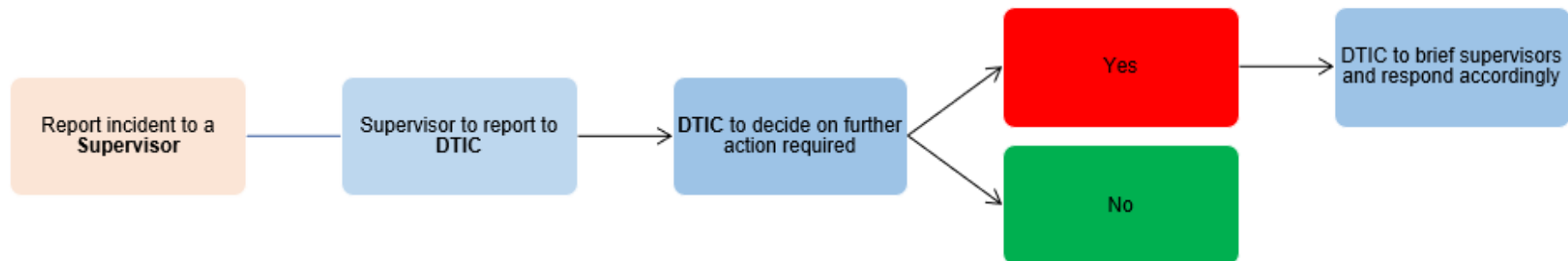
EXAMPLE EMERGENCY FLOW CHARTS

This is an example template only and is not intended as a definitive set of procedures to follow in emergency situations.

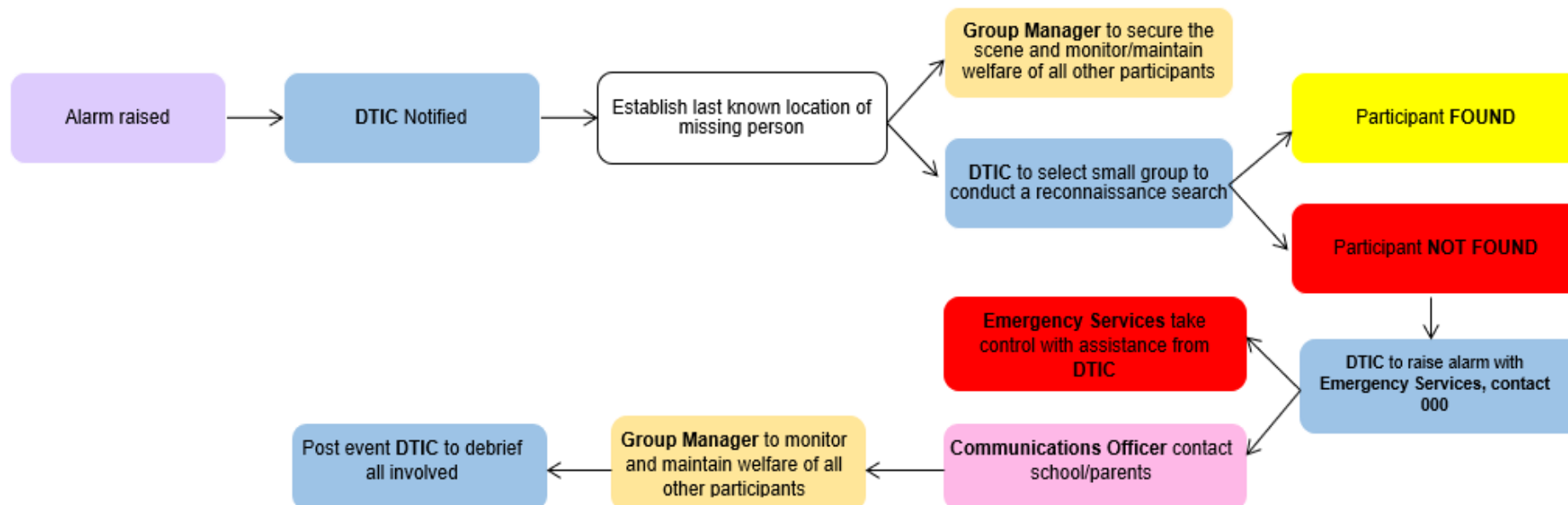
INCIDENT REQUIRING MEDICAL ATTENTION



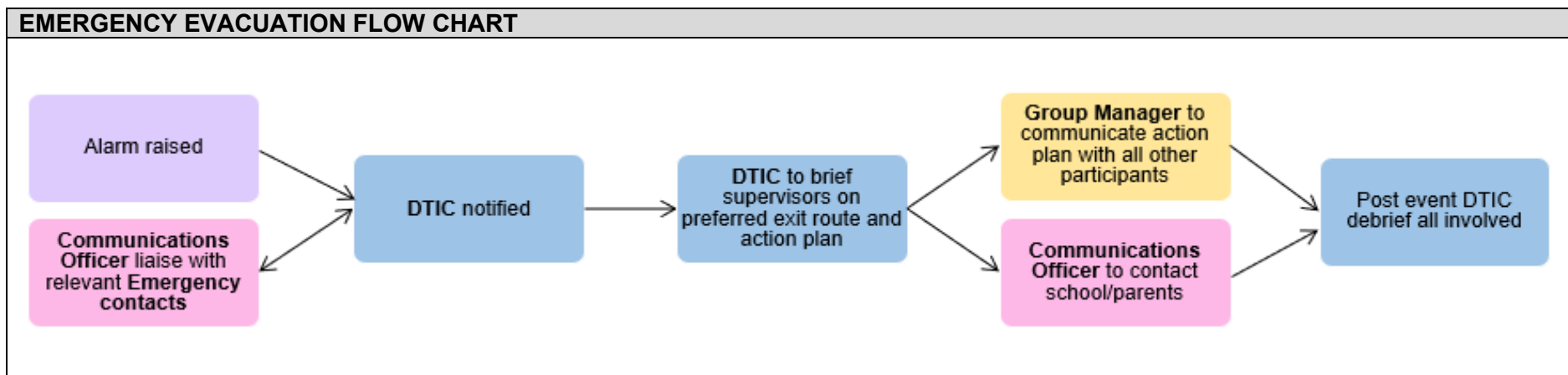
INCIDENT NOT REQUIRING MEDICAL ATTENTION FLOW CHART (for example, negative behaviours)



LOST PARTICIPANT FLOW CHART



The Department Teacher-in-charge must assess each risk that the recreation or outdoor education activity may pose to the safety, health or wellbeing of any student or supervisory team member and propose strategies for minimising and managing those risks (see General Requirements A.13 and A.14).



APPENDIX D. EXTERNAL PROVIDER CHECKLISTS

The Department Teacher-in-charge (DTIC) must submit Part A and B to the Department site manager for planning approval for the recreation and outdoor education activity.

- Part A to be completed by the DTIC
- Part B to be completed, signed and returned by the external provider to the DTIC.

PART A: DEPARTMENT TEACHER-IN-CHARGE EXTERNAL PROVIDER CHECKLIST

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm the following evidence is attached to school planning approval documents:

- ☐ Proof of external provider's level of experience. This can be verified with copies of logbooks or a statement from the approved manager testifying to the competencies of its employees and/or copies of current qualifications.
- ☐ Copy of the commercial operator's permit (if applicable).
- ☐ Copies of any additional permits required by statutory authorities and landowners (if applicable).
- ☐ Copy of a Working with Children Check for any employee who will engage with students. Volunteers assisting an external provider who are exempt from having a Working with Children Check are requested to complete Appendix C: Confidential Declaration Form in the Visitors and Intruders on Public Schools Premises Policy.
- ☐ Copy of current public liability insurance (\$20 million cover minimum).
- ☐ Copy of professional indemnity insurance (\$5 million cover minimum).
- ☐ Copy of the external provider's risk management plan specific to the location, student cohort and activities proposed.
- ☐ Copy of the external provider's emergency response plan.
- ☐ Copy of the external provider's planning documents for each specific recreation or outdoor education activity that will be conducted.
- ☐ Copy of emergency evacuation plans for any venue being used in this activity.
- ☐ Signed terms and conditions by external provider at the bottom of the External provider checklist.

If auto belay devices and/or artificial climbing structures (ACS) are included in activities:

- ☐ Copies of a Certificate of Inspection for all Auto Belay Devices (must be current within 12 months for internal use and 6 months for external use).
- ☐ Copies of Annual Inspection Certificate for the ACS (must be current within 12 months).
- ☐ Statement confirming the level of training external provider staff possess in order to ensure safe operation and effective rescues.

The Department Teacher-in-charge is required to send to the external provider:

- ☐ Part B for completion and return to the DTIC; and
- ☐ A summary of each Department supervisory team member's skills, qualifications, roles, responsibilities and experience for their planning purposes.

PART B: EXTERNAL PROVIDER CHECKLIST

The Department of Education requires the following information from external providers prior to engaging their services. The external provider must complete and return.

Please attach evidence of the following:

- ☐ Proof of external provider's level of recent and relevant experience. This can be verified with copies of logbooks or a statement from the approved manager testifying to the competencies of its employees and/or copies of current qualifications.
- ☐ Copy of the commercial operator's permit (if applicable).
- ☐ Copies of any additional permits required by statutory authorities and land owners (if applicable).
- ☐ Copies of a *Working with Children Check* for any employee who will engage with the students. Volunteers assisting an external provider who are exempt from having a *Working with Children Check* are requested to complete *Appendix C: Confidential Declaration Form* in the *Visitors and Intruders on Public Schools Premises Policy*.
- ☐ Copy of current public liability insurance (\$20 million cover minimum).
- ☐ Copy of professional indemnity insurance (\$5 million cover minimum).
- ☐ Copy of the external provider's risk management plan, specific to the location, student cohort and activities proposed.
- ☐ Copy of the external provider's emergency response plan.
- ☐ Copy of the external provider's planning documents for each specific recreation or outdoor education activity that will be conducted.
- ☐ Copy of emergency evacuation plans for the venues being used in this activity.

If auto belay devices and/or artificial climbing structures (ACS) are included in activities for students:

- ☐ Copies of a Certificate of Inspection for all Auto Belay Devices (must be current within 12 months for internal use and 6 months for external use).
- ☐ Copies of Annual Inspection Certificate for the ACS (must be current within 12 months).
- ☐ Statement confirming the level of training external provider staff have to ensure safe operation and effect rescue.

Terms and conditions: I understand that the consumption of illicit drugs or alcohol is prohibited and that consuming medications that may impair judgement during any school activity or excursion is not allowed.

I understand that Department staff cannot sign indemnities, disclaimers, waivers or other documents which absolve the external provider from liability for their own negligent acts or omissions.

External provider: Company name

Please print full name

Signature

Date: ____/____/____



Department of
Education

APPENDIX E: ABSEILING AND CLIMBING

EFFECTIVE: 21 JULY 2025

VERSION: 3.1

ABSEILING AND CLIMBING

This document contains specific requirements related to abseiling and climbing activities and must be read in conjunction with *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures*.

1. BACKGROUND

Abseiling and climbing involve descending and ascending on vertical or near vertical surfaces, both natural and artificial (fixed towers, buildings and bridges), using ropes and friction devices to manage movement.

Abseiling and climbing are often delivered in association with other recreation and outdoor education activities (caving or ropes courses and bouldering). Refer to these activity specific documents for the mandated requirements that apply to those activities.

DEFINITIONS

ABSEILING

The sport of descending a near vertical surface using a rope and friction device (also known as rappelling).

ARTIFICIAL CLIMBING STRUCTURE (ACS)

An artificial structure (also referred to as a climbing wall) specifically built for the purpose of climbing, abseiling and/or bouldering.

ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR

Assists the Qualified Supervisor. Must have recent and relevant experience in the activity, at the level being offered to the students.

AUTO BELAY

A device that acts independently from human involvement taking up slack as the participant ascends a surface. When the device is placed under tension (for example, in the event of a fall) the device catches and then slowly lowers participants to the ground.

BELAY

Controlling a safety rope attached to people or equipment as a back-up in the case of primary system failure or climber fall. Belaying may be done from above (top belay) or below (bottom belay) the participant depending on the nature of the activity and/or the environment.

BOULDERING

A form of rock climbing performed at low heights (where any part of a person's body remains below 2.4m in height from ground level) on small rock formations or artificial surfaces without the use of harnesses or ropes (refer to *Appendix N: Ropes Courses and Bouldering*)

CLIMBING

Ascending cliffs, boulders, buildings, walls, ladders, challenge elements on ropes courses, and mountains. Usually involves following certain routes on a face that requires the use of handholds and footholds, while confirming that a safety system or back-up is established through people and specialised equipment.

DEPARTMENT TEACHER-IN-CHARGE

A member of the teaching staff employed by the Department of Education (or an Approved Provider) and is managing the school activity. For information relating to Approved Providers refer to Appendix A: General Requirements.

DYNAMIC ROPE

A rope that is designed to stretch and absorb force when subjected to a shock load in climbing falls. Generally used for climbing and for top-rope belaying.

EWBANK SCALE

A numerical system used to grade the level of difficulty of the hardest single point on a climbing route.

HARNESS HANG SYNDROME (SUSPENSION TRAUMA)

Can occur when a participant is suspended within a harness for a prolonged period of time causing blood to pool. This has the potential to lead to shock, unconsciousness and/or death.

LEAD CLIMBING

Ascending a face, trailing a rope that is clipped to protection, placed by the climber, on the climbing face or clipped to fixed protection.

MULTI-PITCHED ABSEILING AND CLIMBING

Abseiling or climbing where the terrain or the length of the total climb requires the climb to be done in separate pitches, with anchors established at each pitch on the ascent, descent and/or traverse.

PITCH

The length of the face of a cliff or wall between the start and finish of each abseil or climb.

QUALIFIED SUPERVISOR

Has the required qualifications, skill, experience and technical knowledge to instruct the activity.

STATIC ROPE

A rope with minimal stretch used for abseiling, hauling and rescue purposes.

SUPERVISORY TEAM

A pair or group of adults who have a supervisory role at the activity.

TOP-ROPE CLIMBING

A climber is belayed from a system that has the belay rope directed through anchors and specialist equipment placed at the top of the climb or abseil pitch.

2. ENVIRONMENT

The Department Teacher-in-charge must determine the suitability of the venue after considering each student's capacity, skills and experience, the planned activity and the supervision required.

The physical characteristics of the site (exposure, access, and level of difficulty) must be taken into account with specific attention to loose rock, surface texture and obstacles.

Students must not be involved in abseiling and climbing activities in areas that have a history of rock fall.

Abseiling must not be conducted in areas that have a known fragile environment or known unstable areas. Abseiling at Churchman's Brook is prohibited due to the fragility of the environment and the unsuitable nature of the cliff top.

Attention must be given to the potential risk of injury, including but not limited to:

- defining selected areas appropriately; and
- not allowing students to throw or trundle rocks.

The weather forecast must be checked prior to commencement of, and regularly throughout the activity, as it might be necessary to cancel, modify or relocate the activity at any time. Check the Bureau of Meteorology for up-to-date conditions and weather warnings.

Guidance

Key sources of information regarding the venue include:

- the venue manager
- the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions
- other schools that have conducted similar activities at the location.

Care should be taken to protect the environment. Tested and tagged anchors, such as glued-in ring bolts and stainless-steel loops set in concrete (that have been installed by land managers/owners) are used in preference to using trees for anchors. Where it is necessary to use trees as anchors for rigging, tree trunks should be protected with carpet or similar padding. Alternatively, padded or broad slings need to be used. Some permits require established fixed anchors to be used.

The selection of a location takes into consideration the:

- visibility
- access
- descent or ascent lines (for example, surface condition and level of difficulty throughout)
- the appropriate degree of difficulty.

It is recommended that locations that provide a walk-out exit route are more suitable for school abseiling and climbing activities as they ensure a safe exit in the event of an emergency.

3. CAPACITY OF STUDENTS

Before commencing abseiling and climbing activities, the Qualified Supervisor must determine whether each student has the capacity to participate in belaying activities, the required climbing and roping skills to participate safely, and the maturity required to manage the safety systems.

The use of a venue with an ACS should be considered for novice students before proceeding to a natural environment.

The height, complexity, pitch and nature of getting to the dispatch platform should be taken into consideration when determining whether or not students have the capacity to participate in the activity.

Multi-pitched abseiling and climbing activities are only suitable for older, trained and/or highly experienced students who demonstrate experience in lead climbing, top-rope climbing, rigging and belaying.

Multi-pitched abseiling and climbing activities are not recommended for school programs unless the students have completed several single-pitch descents and have been taught self-rescue skills.

Students of primary school age, generally do not have the ability or maturity to belay others. Older students can participate in belaying activities if the Qualified Supervisor has confirmed

that each student taking part has the capacity and training to belay effectively with the belay device being used.

Primary-age students

Abseiling and climbing activities are not recommended for students in Kindergarten to Year 4 as younger students:

- generally do not possess the necessary degree of responsibility and maturity to meet all the requirements of the activity
- stage of physical growth and development are not suitable.

Primary-age students may participate in abseiling and climbing activities in controlled environments if:

- the introductory or selected climbing activity is deemed appropriate for the capacity of the students and the Qualified Supervisor determines that it is safe for them to participate
- the students are top rope belayed for abseiling and climbing at all times
- a qualified adult is controlling the belaying system.

Students with a disability or impairment may participate in abseiling and climbing activities if adequate safety and control measures are implemented. Specific consideration must be given to:

- the type and level of disability or impairment
- the location and access
- the provision of adjustments to enable the student to access the curriculum activity on the same basis as their peers.

Students who have a medically diagnosed condition that may impact on their safety must be cleared by a medical practitioner before they can participate.

Alternate, modified or adjusted activities should be provided for students who have limited capacity to participate.

4. STUDENT HEALTH CARE

Refer to the [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) for further requirements.

5. ACTIVITIES

The full range of proposed activities must be assessed by the Qualified Supervisor in consultation with the Department Teacher-in-charge, before final decisions are made about activities and areas to be used.

Students may need to develop prerequisite skills (for example, belaying, bottom rope breaking, attaching gear to ropes, handling ropes, balance and weight distribution) before abseiling or climbing activities are introduced.

Everyone involved in the activity must be secured if they are within two metres of a cliff or unprotected edge. This distance must be increased if conditions are windy or wet, or if there is loose or downward-sloping rock and/or uneven ground.

Guidance

Authority to access [Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions](#) managed sites can be obtained from the relevant office at the time of booking.

Abseiling

The Qualified Supervisor determines the selection of an appropriate back-up system for the abseilers.

The back-up system includes a top-rope belay or a bottom brake.

Top-rope belaying can be used to introduce novices to abseiling where there are no suitable bottom brake persons. Top-rope belays are to be attached directly to the harness of the abseiler, independent of the abseil system.

Responsibility for bottom braking is only given to persons who demonstrate the appropriate level of maturity, have been adequately trained, and demonstrate competence in the braking technique.

Back-up systems that may be used for highly experienced and competent students include:

- an auto-braking device or
- a self-belay, using a prusik loop or similar.

The following activities are not permitted:

- Forward abseiling/rappelling
- Angel jumps, star jumps and/or other jumps or forms of descent in which the abseiler's brake hand does not constantly control the rate of descent.

The supervisory team will need to assess and consider students with a disability or impairment that prevents them from participating safely in roping activities. For example, a disability or impairment that restricts a student's ability to use their brake hand to constantly control the rate of descent warrants assessment. Following discussion with the student(s), the supervisory team may need to control the rate of descent on their behalf.

Guidance

Students should be introduced to abseiling and climbing activities in a non-threatening, supportive environment.

Belaying

Only students who have been taught to belay and have been deemed competent by the Qualified Supervisor may belay.

The number of supervisors to active systems for the initial training period must not exceed one Qualified Supervisor for every three active systems, within close proximity, for artificial surfaces and one active system for natural surfaces.

When climbing, the belayer must be appropriately anchored to the ground (by rated anchor points that are tested annually) when attached to the belay system. Back up belayers do not have to be anchored.

Use of body belays is not permitted.

When belaying using a gri-gri (an assisted braking belay device) participants are taught a belaying technique that is transferable to other belay devices.

When climbing with any part of the body over 2.4 metres, all participants must be on a top roped bottom belay using a dual attachment standard, except where lead climbing is being taught.

Qualified Supervisors will visually check each student's harness for correct fitting and attachment before allowing them to climb.

Auto Belay Devices

Facilities that include the use of auto belay devices are required to produce certificates of current inspection of their devices as follows:

- Indoor facilities: Current certificate of inspection within 12 months.
- Permanent external facilities: Current certificate of inspection within 6 months.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must verify currency of external providers through the use of Appendix D: External Provider Checklists.

The use of auto belay devices on mobile climbing walls (ACS) or structures is prohibited.

Climbing

Climbers must be attached to the belay line with one of the following systems:

- A direct tie-in to the harness using a follow-through figure eight knot.
- Two opposite locking carabiners attached to the harness.
- A direct tie-in plus a single carabiner that has an isolation loop (for example, an alpine butterfly).

The supervisory team must confirm that each student taking part in belaying has the capacity and training to belay effectively with the belay device being used.

Backup belayers are recommended for all belay systems.

Any fall should be quickly arrested without a significant shock load. The belayer may stand at the bottom of the pitch with the belay line directed through anchors above the climber (sometimes called top-rope climbing with bottom belay, as found in climbing wall situations). Alternatively, the belayer may be a part of the anchor system above the climber and be directly in line between the climber and the anchor (sometimes called top rope climbing with top belay).

Bouldering is permitted in a designated area to a maximum height of 2.4 metres, indicated by a line at this height. Unroped activities must not be conducted unless the facility has this line in place (refer to Appendix N: Ropes Courses and Bouldering).

The floor, walls and area within 2.4 metres of any part of the climb should be free and clear of sharp hazards (see more information on cushioning below).

Lead climbing

Students may be provided with the opportunity to develop lead climbing skills as part of a developmentally appropriate, documented, sequential, learning program if the:

- Qualified Supervisor conducting the activity has skills and recent and relevant experience in lead climbing
- student has demonstrated competence in top-rope climbing, rigging, belay and self-rescue techniques.

Students and supervisors must be briefed prior to commencement of the activity, in relation to the activity requirements and safety aspects (refer *Section 16: Briefing Students and Supervisors*).

6. EQUIPMENT

Purpose designed equipment that meets the requirements of relevant Australian Standards must be used for all activities that involve abseiling, climbing and the use of ropes.

All abseiling and/or climbing lines must be assessed and deemed safe for use by a Qualified Supervisor before the activity commences.

Ropes, tapes, cords, harnesses and helmets must be retired after a maximum of five years unless the manufacturer specifies a longer service life. Equipment must not be used if there is any doubt about its integrity.

Manufacturer's specifications, instructions and recommendations (for example, about participants' weight, methods of stabilisation, use on firm ground, the region/conditions the ACS is designed for etc.) must be taken into consideration.

For school supplied equipment regular maintenance checks are to be conducted by the school, logged and records maintained. Facility and equipment maintenance logbooks must include:

- an item identification system
- manufacturers specification for equipment usage
- date of purchase and/or date of manufacture
- date of initial use and proposed date of retirement
- frequency and type of use
- copies of maintenance inspection and/or construction conformance paperwork
- date and details of maintenance.

The Qualified Supervisor in consultation with the Department Teacher-in-charge, must be satisfied with the inspections and maintenance of all relevant equipment, including ACS prior to the commencement of the activity. A system for retirement of equipment should be established. Correct storage and transportation of equipment also needs to be taken into consideration.

External providers are responsible for recording the safety and maintenance of their equipment.

Static ropes made specifically for ACS are permitted for top rope belaying.

Dynamic ropes are used where the belay system may be shock-loaded.

Adequate emergency equipment must be readily accessible and include a dedicated rescue rope that is greater than the length of the longest pitch.

Appropriate first aid equipment must be readily accessible. The first aid kit must include items appropriate to the activity, environment, size and needs of the group, and duration of the activity.

A Qualified Supervisor must personally check the integrity of the belay system before allowing each student to climb.

Temporary elements must be erected by qualified personnel who are competent in the erection and supervision of climbing activities.

Artificial anchor points

Suitable artificial anchors are tested annually by authorised certifiers and tagged as being safe to use for rigging, abseiling and climbing ropes. When using artificial anchor points, at least two anchors should be used. One anchor is sufficient to protect a bottom belayer from an upward force.

Cushioning

It is recommended, where a climber's feet will be positioned in excess of one (1) metre from safe ground, that cushioning or crash mats are provided and positioned so there is no

possibility of contacting the floor surface if a participant falls. This is part of a multi-barrier approach and other risk management options such as pulleys must also be considered.

Stable floor cushioning or mats/crash mats specifically designed for the purpose are used for landing areas when soloing, bouldering and/or traversing, and where spotters are not used.

Any cushioning provided must have an even surface, with no gaps between the mats or the wall.

Participants

Each participant must wear:

- appropriate clothing
- a correctly fitting harness, that meets Australian Standards
- a hard-shell climbing or roping helmet (with secure chin strap) that meets the Australian Standards when abseiling or climbing activities are in progress, or at the base of a cliff/face
- gloves of an appropriate size worn on each hand while handling moving rope (exemptions apply where *Slow Go* pulleys are used)
- fully enclosed footwear
- other specialist equipment specific to the activity that meets Australian Standards.

All participants should conduct safety checks of all equipment prior to the commencement of the activity and at critical times throughout the activity. Any participant that removes gear must again be checked by a Qualified Supervisor prior to recommencement in any activity.

Participants taking the role of back-up belayer do not need to wear a harness.

Locking carabiners must be used for all belay points and rated carabiners must be used for attaching equipment to harnesses.

Figure eight descenders are recommended for novice abseilers.

Access ladders or stairways to abseiling platforms are blocked off when they are not in use.

Artificial surfaces

An ACS is subject to a number of inspections, per Australian Standard AS 2316.1.1:2021 (or successor). The results of which must be recorded and retained. The comprehensive annual safety inspections must be conducted by a competent person, who is not involved in the day-to-day operations of the ACS. This can be undertaken by a qualified rigger, independent industry expert or independent organisation.

Guidance

It is recommended that supervisors maintain evidence of their currency and experience through the use of a logbook, or similar.

For further information, refer to Australian Adventure Activity Good Practice Guide: Abseiling and Climbing.

Students should not share personal equipment (buddy checks and procedures set up by supervisors will eliminate this practice).

A broad spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen should be applied as per manufacturer's instructions.

Drinking water should be available at all times.

7. THE SUPERVISORY TEAM

Refer to the Appendix A: General Requirements in the *Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

8. EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure that external providers are made aware of the documentation they need to provide, or that must be sighted.

External providers must follow all mandated requirements in the *Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* and will be asked to supply copies of certain documentation, and/or make them available for the Department Teacher-in-charge to sight. External providers should familiarise themselves with Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix D: External Provider Checklist.

9. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team members possess skills in abseiling and climbing and have recent and relevant experience, knowledge and skills to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during abseiling and/or climbing activities.

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for mandated first aid and CPR accreditation requirements and supervisory team competencies.

The Qualified Supervisor must hold a current relevant first aid certificate including current cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) accreditation. Where the group is in an isolated or remote area, a member of the supervisory team must have the appropriate first aid qualifications for the location (i.e. remote, isolated, wilderness first aid). Remote or isolated areas may include any location where medical emergency assistance might be more than one hour away, by road, air or water.

At all times, ACS must be supervised by specifically qualified and inducted personnel who are experienced and competent in the supervision of the ACS.

At all roping activities, including single pitch climbing in a school gymnasium, at least one member of the supervisory team must be able to affect a support and rescue, including where harness hang syndrome is suspected.

The Qualified Supervisor must hold a current activity specific qualification AND maintain proof of experience (per annum).

The Qualified Supervisor must have:	<u>AND</u> proof of experience:
A current, activity-specific qualification and/or have attained current, activity-specific competencies through a recognised tertiary institution or Registered Training Organisation including: - the activity relevant units from a Certificate III (or higher) in Outdoor Recreation or Outdoor Leadership; or - an equivalent qualification, as recognised by the Director General.	- Maintain proof of 20 hours+ logged experience per annum, validated by a qualified individual, in Single Rope Technique (SRT); and - Logged experience that demonstrates currency in rescue training.

Guidance

Qualifications or accreditation provided by the organisation that built or sold the ASC (climbing wall) are generally not appropriate, for conflict-of-interest reasons. The Qualified Supervisor's accreditations should align with the relevant Standard for operating an ASC in a particular location.

Site specific competency

Where public schools have an established ACS on school site, annual training by a qualified external provider can be accredited as a set of competencies for that site only. This competency can only be obtained and agreed upon, through consultation with, and approval by the Department of Education. This site-specific competency is recognised in the qualification table above as 'an equivalent qualification, as recognised by the Director General'.

This competency is only to be used for top rope climbing with an anchored bottom belay, using a mechanical device such as a gri-gri.

Skills and experience

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team:

- has recent and relevant experience in the activity at the level being offered to students
- has the relevant qualifications
- has current CPR qualifications
- understands the emergency responses and supervision responsibilities
- has knowledge and experience in the activity being offered at the specific location.

For lead-climbing, multi-pitched climbing and multi-pitched abseiling activities in natural environments, Qualified Supervisors must have an additional two years logged lead climbing experience, including:

- lead climbing to a minimum of Grade 14 on the Ewbank Scale
- experience in group management procedures appropriate to the difficulty of the activity
- self-rescue and one-on-one rescue procedures.

Qualified Supervisors must have relevant, current skills and experience in Single Rope Technique (SRT) (at least 20 hours of logged experience per annum) and rescue training, be familiar with the hazards of abseiling, and be competent in dealing with emergencies that are consistent with the type of activity and site being used.

The logged experience must be validated by a qualified individual. A qualified individual is a person who can meet the Qualified Supervisor requirements in this activity specific document. In the case of site-specific competencies, the qualified individual would refer to the provider administering the competency to school staff.

Qualified Supervisors must have recent logged experience in SRT and training and experience in checking belay systems.

Guidance

The Ewbank Scale should be used to assess the difficulty and danger of climbing the planned route.

10. MINIMUM LEVELS OF SUPERVISION

Different levels of supervision are required for different types of abseiling and climbing activities, such as multi-pitched abseiling, lead climbing or multi-pitched climbing as well as methods of belay (top or bottom belay).

The Department Teacher-in-charge must determine group sizes and supervision levels after considering the:

- purpose and type of activity
- age, capacity, experience and skills of each student

- qualifications, capacity and experience of the supervisor(s)
- students' medical conditions, disabilities or impairments
- location of the activity and nature of the environment.

Greater supervision must be provided for less able students who are participating in activities off school grounds. Students not directly involved in activities must be supervised.

Abseiling and climbing activities are not recommended for students in Kindergarten to Year 4.

ABSEILING

Artificial Surface (ACS)

SINGLE PITCH

Must have one Qualified Supervisor at all times:

- One Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof and
- Recommended maximum of 3 active systems at any one time.

Natural Surface

SINGLE PITCH

Must have two supervisors at all times:

- One Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof and
- Recommended only one active system at any one time per Qualified Supervisor.

MULTI PITCH

Must have two qualified supervisors at all times:

- One Qualified Supervisor for every four students or part thereof and
- Only one active system at any one time for every two Qualified Supervisors.

CLIMBING

Artificial Surface (ACS)

TOP ROPE CLIMBING - Bottom Belay system

Must have one Qualified Supervisor at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof and
- recommended maximum of 5 active systems at any one time per Qualified Supervisor.

LEAD CLIMBING

Must have two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof and
- recommended only one active system at any one time per Qualified Supervisor.

Natural Surface

TOP ROPE CLIMBING - Bottom belay system

Must have two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof and
- recommended up to three active systems at any one time per Qualified Supervisor.

TOP ROPE CLIMBING - Top belay system

Must have two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof and
- recommended only one active system at any one time per Qualified Supervisor.

LEAD CLIMBING

Must have two Qualified Supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every four students or part thereof and
- only one active system at any one time for every two Qualified Supervisors.

MULTI PITCH CLIMBING

Must have two Qualified Supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every two students or part thereof and
- only one active system at any one time for every two Qualified Supervisors.

The table below illustrates the minimum supervision requirements for common group sizes. Groups may be larger than those indicated here but must remain within the prescribed supervision ratios and any limits set out earlier in this document.

	<i>Environment</i>	<i>Degree of difficulty</i>	<i>Number of students</i>	<i>Qualified Supervisors</i>	<i>Assistant Supervisor</i>	<i>Active systems</i>	<i>Total supervisory team</i>
ABSEILING	Artificial surface (ACS)	Single pitched	1 - 22	1	0	3	1
	Natural surface	Single pitched	1 - 22	1	1	1	2
		Multi pitched	1 - 8	2	0	1	2
CLIMBING	Artificial surface (ACS)	Top rope	1 - 22	1	0	5	1
		Lead climbing	1 - 22	1	1	1	2
	Natural surface	Top rope (bottom belay)	1 - 22	1	1	3	2
		Top rope (top belay)	1 - 22	1	1	1	2
		Lead climbing	1 - 8	2	0	1	2
		Multi-pitched	1 - 4	2	0	1	2

11. SUPERVISION STRATEGIES

Supervision strategies must be confirmed by the Department Teacher-in-charge to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students is maintained at all times.

Supervision strategies must address circumstances where students are not participating in the activity.

Students must be within a supervisor's line of sight at all times.

At larger sites, several groups may operate independently provided that each group meets minimum supervision requirements and has the necessary safety, first aid and communication equipment.

A location for a safe (supervised) helmet-off area is determined and communicated to all participants.

Supervisor numbers must be increased if requested by an external venue manager.

Participants who do not display responsible behaviour or attitude are to be removed from the activity.

Qualified Supervisors are responsible for confirming that students are correctly attached to the belay system before climbing commences. It is strongly recommended that they individually check all attachment points and harnesses before allowing each student to commence climbing activities.

The belaying equipment and technique must be monitored during the climb by members of the supervisory team and belaying partners, using a buddy system.

Individuals involved in the spotting of participants who are bouldering or traversing must be provided with a specific briefing, demonstration of the procedures to follow, and a high level of supervision.

12. IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Students and supervisors must be easily identifiable.

A system of identification is determined by the Department Teacher-in-charge and may include:

- the wearing of coloured helmets, armbands or school shirts
- confining students to designated areas not being utilised by other schools or members of the public.

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

13. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

14. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix B: Risk Management Plan for further requirements.

Risk management plans must include the possibility of harness hang syndrome and an appropriate action plan for when harness hang syndrome is suspected.

15. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix C: Emergency Response Plan in the *Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

16. BRIEFING STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that all participants are briefed about:

- the educational purpose (learning intentions) and the cooperative nature of the activity
- components of the activity (including skills required)
- standards of behaviour, including roles and responsibilities
- hazard identification and safety requirements
- buddy practices and procedures that will be followed if members of the party become lost or separated from the group (refer to Appendix F: Bushwalking - Appendix 1)
- physical boundaries marked for the activity
- communication signals to gain attention and request assistance
- emergency and evacuation procedures
- minimal impact principles for that location (Leave No Trace principles).

In addition to the above, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team have been briefed about the following:

- the role and location of supervisors
- maintaining supervision ratios (including of those students not involved in the activity)
- modified/adjusted activity requirements for students with a disability or impairment
- the system for identifying students and supervisors
- student-specific medical requirements
- conditions associated with hypothermia, sunburn and dehydration
- communication strategies that will be used throughout the activity, including designated signals to gain the attention of the whole group, and to identify when emergency assistance is required
- location of first aid kit and emergency/rescue equipment
- appropriate clothing for the activity and weather conditions, including thermal and sun protection
- aspects of the environment and expected weather conditions
- the route to be followed including pre-determined stops and/or meeting points along the way (if applicable).

Special information sessions must be arranged for students or staff who were absent from preparatory briefings.

17. INFORMED CONSENT

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements* for further requirements.

APPENDIX 1: PRE-ACTIVITY BRIEFING

Below is a mnemonic to assist activity leaders in structuring student briefings.

S	Safety	• Safety is an attitude. • No skylarking or put-downs during abseiling and climbing activities. • All participants consider other group members and other users of the immediate area. • Warn about the dangers of being over-confident and complacent.
A	Always check	• Don't assume; if in any doubt, check with an instructor. • A helmet with chin strap secured is always worn when abseiling, climbing, or where there is any potential risk from falling objects (especially if other groups are in the same area).
F	First aid	• All participants know the identity of the person to approach for first aid treatment, and the location of the first aid kit. • Remind students to verify that the Department Teacher-in-charge has current medical information.
E	Environment	• Highlight weather conditions. • Stress the need for sun, rain and cold protection, recommend level of fluid intake and provide site-specific details, e.g. waves, fragile areas, loose rock.
R	Rocks	• Participants are reminded to be aware of loose or brittle rocks at the top of an abseil or climbing pitch, and that they do not dislodge any rocks. Rocks are never thrown. • Practise response drills, in case of rock falls or dropping equipment (e.g. <i>Below Call</i>), plus appropriate actions. • Indicate that participants at the base of the pitch should already be looking up and will therefore see the object. • Evasive action should be taken as necessary, e.g. move into the cliff rather than away from it, do not run, bend forward or expose the back of the neck.
O	Only	• Instructors or supervisors are the only persons who can dispatch climbers and abseilers.
P	Pathways	• Specify the safest access paths - up and down. Participants stick to paths and do not take short cuts. • Participants must let others know when they are going to walk behind them or intend to step over a rope that secures them to an anchor point. • No one walks between an abseiler, dispatcher and the cliff edge.
E	Equipment	• All participants are responsible for taking care of equipment. • Avoid stepping on ropes and dropping hardware. • If something is dropped, report it immediately to an instructor for checking. Avoid locking screw gate carabiners when they are not in use. • Clip helmets and gloves to harnesses when not in use.
S	Stay back	• All participants are secured by a safety tether, belayed descent line and back-up system when within two metres of a cliff or unprotected edge. • Stay back from the bottom of the cliff face if not involved in any activity and minimise time in the potential fall zone. • Participants not actively participating in the activity should wait in a designated area, away from the cliff face.
P	Presentation	• Loose hair and clothing is secured to prevent it jamming in the descent device during abseil.

		• All loops (rings, chains, necklaces, pendants and jewellery) are removed.
O	Observe	• Participants observe appropriate <u>Leave No Trace</u> environmental practices: removing litter; looking after all vegetation; 'stewardship' (cleaning up after others). • If the group is using vegetation for anchor points, pad the vegetation to protect it from damage.
R	Respond	• All communications are responded to promptly and appropriately. • Outline the calls, communications and actions that will be used during the activity, including emergency signals and procedures.
T	Toilets	• Advise toileting arrangements for the particular site, stressing environmental and hygiene concerns and the need for harness checks on return. It may be advisable to designate male and female areas.
S	Safety	• Safety is highlighted twice because of its high importance. • Safety is the joint responsibility of all supervisors and participants. • Everyone knows who is in charge and is aware of the chain of command. • All participants are made aware that they need to be extremely attentive when engaging in roping activities. • Those who do not display a responsible attitude will be removed from the activity.



Department of
Education

APPENDIX F: BUSHWALKING

EFFECTIVE: 21 JULY 2025

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BUSHWALKING

This document contains specific requirements related to bushwalking and must be read in conjunction with *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures*.

1. BACKGROUND

Students participate in bushwalking as a short (hour or two) walk, a day walk, long or multi day walk, outdoor education expedition, or as part of an overnight hike. Bushwalking can occur in a diverse range of environments and natural areas including but not limited to, coastal, plains, forest, arid or outback, tropical, mountain or alpine.

If bushwalking activities are planned during a school camp, then the requirements in the camping activity-specific document will also apply.

DEFINITIONS

ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR

Assists the Qualified Supervisor and or Department Teacher-in-charge. Must have recent and relevant experience in the activity, at the level being offered to the students.

BUSHWALKING

Walking in natural areas.

DAY WALK

A walking excursion, usually on defined tracks, normally in a natural setting and for the duration of a day or part thereof.

DEPARTMENT TEACHER IN CHARGE

A member of the teaching staff employed by the Department of Education (or an Approved Provider) and managing the school activity. For information relating to Approved Providers refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements*.

OVERNIGHT AND MULTI-DAY WALK

A walk that incorporates an overnight stay.

QUALIFIED SUPERVISOR

Has the required qualifications, skill, experience and technical knowledge to instruct the activity.

REMOTE OR ISOLATED AREAS

Includes any location where medical emergency assistance is more than one hour away by road, air and/or water.

SUPERVISORY TEAM

A pair or group of adults who have a supervisory role at the activity.

2. ENVIRONMENT

The suitability of a bushwalking activity location is determined after considering the:

- skills, experience and capacity of each student
- location risks (for example, river crossings, exposed areas, slippery rocks, cliff and rock faces)
- level of access to paths, roads and communication.

Many walking trails have been graded according to the *Australian Walking Track Grading System*, a voluntary industry standard:

Grade of walk	Gradient	Quality of path	Distance	Experience required
1	Flat	Well-formed track. Universal accessibility.	< 5km	None
2	Gentle hills	Formed track	< 10km	None
3	Short steep hills	Formed track, some obstacles	< 20km	Some. Moderate level of fitness.
4	Very steep sections	Rough track, many obstacles	N/A	Experienced
5	Very steep and difficult	Rough, unformed track	N/A	Very experienced with specialist skills including navigation and emergency first aid.

School groups using the Bibbulmun Track or Cape to Cape Track (or other such areas) should consult the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) or Emergency WA regarding fire bans, smoke, park closure alerts and updates that may affect their proposed activity.

When assessing the suitability of a location, access to resources, services and facilities also need to be considered (for example, toilets, water, external communication and assistance). Research should be conducted around desired locations well in advance to ensure sites are suitable for group size and competency levels.

The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions consider school activities as non-commercial events and requires the relevant application form (Non-commercial Government organisations application form (including state schools)) to be submitted and approved by the relevant Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions district office.

Groups using the Bibbulmun Track, will need to complete a notification of intent form. See the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions for trail updates, maps and conditions.

Many other sites have access restrictions. Possession of a map does not confer the right of entry to private property on some public reserves. Written permission must be gained from the relevant authority (local land management body, lease holders or private property owner). These organisations/owners can also be consulted for information about:

- route planning (including evacuation)
- alternative routes in the event of restricted access
- shelter, toilets and drinking water availability along the planned route
- procedures to follow when there is a risk of bad weather, storms, bushfires and/or other changes to the environment.

Weather considerations

Weather conditions must be assessed and monitored:

- in the days leading up to the activity
- on the day of the activity
- throughout the activity.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must continue to assess conditions and comply with fire ban regulations. The supervisory team may need to modify, relocate or cancel the activity at any time. Check the [Bureau of Meteorology](#) for up-to-date conditions and weather warnings.

Bushwalking and bushcraft activities are not to be undertaken in any area where high alert weather conditions are forecast and or any area where the fire danger rating is extreme or above. Refer to [Department of Fire and Emergency Services](#) and/or [EmergencyWA](#) for fire alerts or fire danger ratings, or contact the local shire as part of an environmental check.

If bushwalking or camping during the fire restriction season, the Department Teacher-in-charge must identify evacuation routes and confirm that the group has access to up-to-date fire information via radio, mobile or satellite phones during the activity.

Guidance

Other sources of information may include:

- *the venue manager*
- *Western Australian Police*
- *the local ranger, lease holder, private property owner or land manager*
- *Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions*
- *experienced bushwalkers and rogainers*
- *orienteering or rogaining clubs or associations*
- *other schools which have conducted similar activities at that location*
- *Outdoors WA or other external providers.*

Leave-no-trace Principles are observed at all times, particularly in environmentally sensitive areas as some walking areas cannot sustain frequent usage by groups (dunes, caves).

Fires can only be lit in approved areas or in existing fireplaces. Fuel stoves are used wherever possible (for further information about stoves and fires, refer to the camping activity-specific document).

For overnight or multi-day walks, the selection of venues should also take into account:

- *campsite/shelter availability*
- *access to facilities*
- *weather conditions*
- *emergency procedures*
- *access to communication*
- *age, fitness and medical condition of the students*
- *requirements for camping for overnight stays*
- *advice from local rangers, land managers and other sources.*

It is recommended that when available, serviced camp sites should be used for students who are inexperienced at camping.

3. CAPACITY OF STUDENTS

Prior to commencing the program, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that each student has the capacity to participate safely.

If bushwalking activities are combined with other recreation and/or outdoor education activities, mandated activity-specific requirements will apply. Students may require additional skills if they are to participate safely in other activities. Refer to the relevant activity specific document/s for further information, qualifications and supervision requirements that apply.

Alternate, modified or adjusted activities should be provided for students who have limited capacity to participate.

Students with a disability or impairment may participate in desired activities provided adequate safety and control measures are implemented. Specific consideration is given to:

- the type and level of disability or impairment
- location and access
- the provision of adjustments to enable the student to access the curriculum activity on the same basis as their peers.

Students who have a medically diagnosed condition that may impact their safety must be cleared by a medical practitioner before they can participate.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must be aware of health care maintenance and/or any intensive health care needs of students, particularly allergic reactions to stings or bites. Protective clothing should be considered for students who are susceptible.

A re-assessment of students' capacity is undertaken if any circumstances surrounding the activity change. This includes any change in the condition of the environment, their medical fitness, or their capacity to undertake the activity.

4. STUDENT HEALTH CARE

Refer to [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) for further requirements.

5. ACTIVITIES

The full range of proposed activities (for example, bushwalking, camping, swimming) must be assessed by the Qualified Supervisor, in consultation with the Department Teacher-in-charge to determine whether students have the required skills to safely participate. Mandated qualifications and supervision requirements for those various activities apply. Refer to the relevant activity specific document.

The speed and strength of all students in the group is taken into consideration at all times. The group must be constantly monitored for fatigue and dehydration.

Extra time should be allocated at the beginning of the walk for the adjustment of clothing, footwear and backpacks.

River crossings

River and creek crossings require careful planning and assessment of a number of factors on the day. The decision to cross, and the way in which the crossing might be made, is determined after consideration of:

- access points
- the nature of the river bottom
- the depth and current
- the energy, capacity and swimming ability of group members
- the weather and time of day
- obstructions/obstacles.

Rivers can be crossed using a bridge, various craft, rafts and/or Tyrolean Traverses (using a fixed line to cross from one point to another). Tyrolean Traverses must only be attempted if a supervisor is a Qualified Supervisor with required knowledge and experience in this activity.

The following strategies should be considered when assisting students as they cross a river or creek:

- line astern (single file), wedge formation, circle of support, or one person with support (for example, stick or paddle)

- the use of stronger participants to carry backpacks and other equipment
- the placement of stronger participants at strategic points across the river
- the placement of upstream spotters for hazards floating downstream
- downstream back-ups with a rope to aid distressed students
- buddying less able students with those who are more capable (in groups of two or three)
- establishing a safety rope
- finding another crossing.

River crossings can be extremely hazardous. Groups must not attempt a river crossing if the location or other elements are considered to be dangerous (for example, during periods of flooding; where the depth, speed, bottom load or ability of the group is unknown; or in an estuarine crocodile habitat). Where possible, planned routes should avoid river crossings that require students to enter the water.

6. EQUIPMENT

All equipment must be checked by the Qualified Supervisor to confirm that it is appropriate for the activity, safe and in working order.

Guidance

For further information, refer to Australian Adventure Activity Good Practice Guide: Bushwalking.

If carrying backpacks, equipment may need to be shared amongst the group to manage weight limits. As part of the briefing for an extended bushwalk, students should be instructed how to organise belongings in their backpack so their centre of gravity and comfort is not affected.

Prior to the commencement of the activity, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that participants have easy access to the following items:

- highly visible clothing that's appropriate in bush settings and potential weather conditions, with a particular emphasis on protection from sun, wind, rain, cold and heat conditions. Consideration should be given to woollen or thermal synthetic garments which provide more warmth, and long trousers in an off-trail setting
- a broad rimmed or Legionnaire style hat
- a backpack (if necessary) that ideally, does not exceed one quarter of the body weight of students, and one third of the body weight of adults
- a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen, applied as per manufacturer's instructions.
- insect repellent
- safe, sturdy footwear that is appropriate for the duration of the activity (for example, walking shoes, joggers or sandshoes)
- sufficient drinking water for the duration of the activity (and/or supplied at control points if possible)
- a watch or alternative time telling device
- a waterproof map of the planned route or GPS coordinates
- an emergency whistle and/or head-torch, as relevant.

Supervisors require:

- a waterproof copy of the route plan, map and compass
- a copy of the risk management and emergency response plans
- emergency communication equipment as appropriate to the location, such as a mobile or satellite phone, radio, Emergency Position Indicator Radio Beacon (EPIRB) or Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) and details of the nearest landline numbers
- readily accessible emergency equipment (for example, whistle, torch, fire-lighting equipment)
- readily accessible first aid equipment (preferably carried by the supervisor at the rear of the group). The first aid kit must include items appropriate to the type of training, location, duration, size and needs of the group. For larger groups, two kits may need to be carried

- knowledge of where shelter, toilets, drinking water etc. might be found at the location
- tools for proper waste disposal.

Students should be encouraged to wear brightly coloured, highly visible clothing that suits the weather conditions.

Guidance

For extended/overnight walks, the following recommended items include:

- a map, a route plan, whistles and compasses (students should know how to use these items)
- a comfortable, well-fitting backpack
- a warm sleeping bag appropriate for the conditions, and a sleeping mat
- a suitable hiking tent and waterproof ground sheet
- fire starting equipment, cooking and eating utensils
- food, including supplementary energy food for emergencies
- water - at least two litres per person per day
- a stove with fuel (in some areas)
- a waterproof pack-liner (for example, a strong garbage bag)
- a mirror (for signalling purposes if lost) and a head-torch with spare batteries and globe
- a plastic bag for carrying rubbish
- a small plastic trowel for burying faeces
- a waterproof rain jacket with a hood, a change of clothes in a waterproof bag, socks, gloves.

Reference: Specific Sport and Physical Activity Guidelines.

7. THE SUPERVISORY TEAM

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements in the *Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

8. EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure that external providers are made aware of the documentation they need to provide, or that must be sighted.

External providers must follow all mandated requirements in the *Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* and will be asked to supply copies of certain documentation, and/or make them available for the Department Teacher-in-charge to sight. External providers should familiarise themselves with Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix D: External Provider Checklist.

9. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that supervisory team members possess skills in navigation and bushcraft, and have the appropriate recent and relevant experience, knowledge and skills to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during bushwalking activities.

If undertaking an extended overnight and multi-day walk, all members of the supervisory team must:

- be experienced and competent bushwalkers, proficient in the use of maps and compasses
- have recent and recorded experience in camping
- have knowledge of search, rescue and emergency procedures.

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for mandated first aid and CPR accreditation requirements and supervisory team competencies.

Minimum qualifications and/or formal training accreditations:

The Qualified Supervisor must hold a current relevant first aid certificate including current cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) accreditation. In the case where the group is in an isolated or remote area, a member of the supervisory team must have the appropriate first aid qualifications for the location (Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements). Remote or isolated areas may include any location where medical emergency assistance might be more than one hour away, by road, air and/or water.

Skills and experience

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team:

- has experience in the activity at the level being offered to students
- has relevant qualifications, including current First Aid and CPR qualifications
- understands the emergency responses and supervision responsibilities.

All members of the supervisory team must have skills and personal experience in the particular activity and current knowledge of the location to be used, as well as knowledge of:

- common injuries associated with this activity
- first aid experience in dealing with those injuries.

Guidance

It is recommended that supervisors maintain evidence of their recent and relevant experience through the use of a logbook, or similar.

10. MINIMUM LEVEL OF SUPERVISION

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team members possess skills in the relevant activities and have the appropriate experience, knowledge and skills to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during the activities.

Supervisory requirements must take into consideration the:

- purpose and type of activity
- age, capacity, experience and skills of each student
- qualifications, capacity and experience of the supervisor(s)
- students' medical conditions, disabilities or impairment
- weather conditions and location and nature of the environment and route (for example, local or remote, school, parkland, unfamiliar bushland).

Greater supervision must be provided for less able students who are participating in activities off school grounds. Students not directly involved in activities must be supervised.

Inexperienced students should work in pairs or small groups of greater ability.

Different levels of supervision are required for those activities:

- requiring an overnight stay (refer to Appendix G: Camping)
- undertaken in an uncontrolled environment.

The group size is determined after considering route characteristics, land manager restrictions and environmental factors.

Students must be within the line of sight of the Qualified Supervisor at all times. If the activity goes outside of this line of sight, additional supervisors are required to maintain adequate supervision.

DAY WALKS (OFF SCHOOL SITE GRADE 1)

Kindergarten

Must have a minimum of two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 20 students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every 10 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Pre-primary - Year 3

Must have a minimum of two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every 11 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 4 - 6

Must have a minimum of two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every 11 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

Recommended minimum of two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof.

DAY WALKS (OFF SCHOOL SITE GRADE 2 - 3)

Kindergarten - Year 3

Must have a minimum of two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every 8 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 4 - 6

Must have a minimum of two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every 11 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

Must have a minimum of two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every 11 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

OVERNIGHT/MULTIDAY WALKS

Kindergarten – Year 3

This activity is not recommended for students in Kindergarten - Year 3.

Year 4 - Year 6

Must have a minimum of two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every 8 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

Must have a minimum of two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every 11 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

BUSHWALKS IN FRAGILE, UNTRACKED, PHYSICALLY DEMANDING, REMOTE OR ISOLATED ENVIRONMENTS (GRADE 4+)

Bushwalks in these areas require a higher level of planning, student preparation, and staff supervision. The minimum level of supervision is:

Kindergarten - Year 6

- This activity is not recommended for students in this age group.

Year 7 - 12

Must have a minimum of two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every 8 students or part thereof (inclusive of the Qualified Supervisor).

The table below illustrates the minimum supervision requirements for common group sizes. Groups may be larger than those indicated here but must remain within the prescribed supervision ratios and any limits set out earlier in this document.

<i>Bushwalking type</i>	<i>Year level</i>	<i>Number of students</i>	<i>Qualified Supervisor</i>	<i>Assistant Supervisor</i>	<i>Total supervisory team</i>
Day walks (off school site: Grade 1)	K	1 - 20	1	1	2
	P - 3	1 - 22	1	1	2
		23 - 33	2	1	3
	4 - 6	1 - 22	1	1	2
		23 - 33	2	1	3
	7 - 12	1 - 22	1	0	1
		23 - 44	2	0	2
Day walks (off school site: Grades 2 - 3)	K - 3	1 - 16	1	1	2
		17 - 22	1	2	3
		23 - 24	2	1	3
		25 - 32	2	2	4
	4 - 6	1 - 22	1	1	2
		23 - 33	2	1	3
	7 - 12	1 - 22	1	1	2
		23 - 33	2	1	3
Overnight/ Multiday walks	K - 3	Not Recommended			
	4-6	1 - 16	1	1	2
		17 - 22	1	2	3
		23 - 24	2	1	3
		25 - 32	2	2	4
	7 - 12	1 - 22	1	1	2
		23 - 33	2	1	3
Bushwalks in fragile, untracked, physically demanding, remote or isolated environments (Grade 4+)	K - 6	Not Recommended			
	7 - 12	1 - 16	1	1	2
		17 - 22	1	2	3
		23 - 24	2	1	3
		25 - 32	2	2	4

Participants in a bushwalking activity, in fragile, untracked, physically demanding, remote or isolated environments, must be organised into subgroups of up to eight (8) students with at least one supervisor.

A Qualified Supervisor should be with the student group at the front; a strong or experienced walker should remain at the rear of the group to provide supervision and support for slower walkers.

The Department Teacher-in-charge for the whole group should make regular checks on group numbers and ensure that contact between all supervisors is maintained.

The skills and experience of the supervisors and contingency plans for this strategy must be documented within the risk management plan Appendix B: Risk Management Plan (this information may be provided to parents or carers beforehand).

Except in emergency situations, the group will stay together unless the teaching of a particular skill requires the group to be split. In this case, the required level of supervision of all students must be maintained.

If land managers or government agencies stipulate maximum numbers of participants, schools must adhere to these requirements.

Guidance

It is recommended for bushwalks in fragile, untracked, physically demanding, remote or isolated environments, an additional qualified or experienced supervisor should be available to support one or more of the subgroups.

Overnight stays

Refer to *Appendix G: Camping* for mandated requirements for overnight stays.

11. SUPERVISION STRATEGIES

Supervision strategies must be confirmed by the Department Teacher-in-charge to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students is maintained at all times.

Supervision strategies must address the circumstance when students are not in clear view of the supervisors.

Supervision strategies include:

- the walking pace be restricted to accommodate the slowest member of the group
- whip system of travel should be put in place (for example, a lead supervisor, who is aware of the planned route and is able to direct the group to scheduled stops, and a tail supervisor are designated)
- all participants maintain a line of sight with the person in front and behind them. If the person behind them is not visible, they slow down or stop to allow that person to catch up. They also advise the person in front that they are stopping or slowing down
- a supervisor with a current first aid qualification travels at the rear of the group
- rules are established for all students to remain in close proximity to supervisors (the distance can vary in accordance with student capacity, experience, the terrain and the weather)
- the group will be constantly monitored for fatigue and hydration
- a buddy system will be used and lost buddy procedures are outlined to all participants.
- no participant leaves the group for any reason (including comfort stops) without advising the lead or tail end supervisor
- supervisors conduct regular head counts of the group, particularly at track junctions and/or in difficult conditions
- a pre-designated distance is kept between the front and back supervisor
- pre-determined stops are arranged enroute.

If other schools or groups are using the same venue, potential risks must be identified, and supervisory strategies put in place.

12. IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS

In all settings, students and supervisors must be easily identifiable.

A system of identification is determined by the Department Teacher-in-charge and may include the wearing of school shirts, uniforms, school or other hats, coloured vests, sashes, armbands, name tags or stickers.

Each identification system may be used in combination with others. Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

13. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

14. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix B: Risk Management Plan, for further requirements.

15. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix C: Emergency Management Plan, for further requirements.

16. BRIEFING STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that all participants are briefed about:

- the educational purpose (learning intentions) and the cooperative nature of the activity
- components of the activity (including skills required)
- standards of behaviour, including roles and responsibilities
- hazard identification and safety requirements
- buddy practices and procedures that will be followed if members of the party become lost or separated from the group (refer to Appendix 1)
- physical boundaries marked for the activity
- communication signals to gain attention and request assistance
- emergency and evacuation procedures
- minimal impact principles for that location (Leave No Trace principles).

In addition to the above, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team have been briefed about the following:

- the role and location of supervisors
- maintaining supervision ratios (including of those students not involved in the activity)
- modified activity requirements for students with a disability or impairment
- the system for identifying students and supervisors
- student-specific medical requirements
- conditions associated with hypothermia, sunburn and dehydration
- communication strategies that will be used throughout the activity, including designated signals to gain the attention of the whole group, and to identify when emergency assistance is required
- location of first aid kit and emergency/rescue equipment
- appropriate clothing for the activity and weather conditions, including thermal and sun protection
- aspects of the environment and expected weather conditions

- the route to be followed including pre-determined stops and/or meeting points along the way (if applicable).

Special information sessions must be arranged for students or staff who were absent from preparatory briefings.

Guidance

Supervisors are briefed about the management of dehydration, hyperthermia, hypothermia and other relevant factors (for example, geographical position, weather patterns etc.).

For extended walks that involve an overnight hike, all participants are briefed about:

- *the use of camping equipment (see camping activity-specific document)*
- *food preparation*
- *personal hygiene in natural settings*
- *navigating and route planning*
- *safety practices*
- *first aid*
- *care of the environment*
- *group communication skills.*

17. INFORMED CONSENT

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements in the *Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures* for further requirements.

APPENDIX 1: IN THE EVENT OF SEPARATION INFORMATION FOR THE SUPERVISORY TEAM

If the whole group is lost

If the group is lost, the students must remain together in one place. One supervisor takes responsibility for supervising the group and maintaining morale, while the Department Teacher-in-charge or Qualified Supervisor attempts to determine the group's position.

Possible strategies include:

- using cross-bearings
- retracing the route to the last known bearing
- if on a track, clearly marking a set position before walking approximately a kilometre in either direction
- if not on a track, walking in a fixed direction and keeping a written record of all bearings.

The Qualified Supervisor leading the group marks the route by breaking twigs or building rock cairns and avoids moving to lower ground.

A cut-off time is set. At this time, steps will be taken to notify outside support services and initiate the communications system, as per Appendix C: Emergency Response plan, for the activity.

If the whole group remains lost

- Where the group remains unclear about its position, the Department Teacher-in-charge or Qualified Supervisor locates a sheltered campsite and sets up camp.
- The group attempts to attract attention using known forms of distress signals such as SOS signals, whistle blasts, flashing mirrors or torches, or by lighting a smoky fire by day and/or a bright fire at night.
- The group listens for voices, shouts, and/or whistles.
- Water, food and energy are conserved.

If an individual group or sub-group becomes lost

- Stop and establish a base.
- Question the group as to who is missing, how long they have been missing, what their intentions might have been, and what equipment they have with them. Use this information to assess what might have happened and how large an area might have to be searched, based on the lost students' skills and possible actions they may have taken.
- Send two lookouts (including one supervisor) to the nearest prominent high point with instructions on using caution and communication signals.
- Confirm that the two lookouts have food and water.
- Send a group of three (including, and under the direction of, another supervisor) to:
 - retrace steps to the point where the missing person/s was last seen
 - look for clues of other groups along the way
 - signal, call and listen for replies
 - leave a note at the point last seen (instructing the lost party to remain where they are, should they return)
 - check other possible points they might have gone to.
- This group is given a time limit for reporting back to the Department Teacher-in-charge.
- Should resources and other factors permit, the base camp and lookout are maintained, lookouts relieved, and efforts made to be as visible and observant as possible.

At this point, a large number of variables are considered, depending on the:

- time of day
- abilities and maturity of the students
- equipment and food carried by the students
- any relevant medical or health information

- information collected by gathering evidence from the retracing party and other group members;
- the terrain
- weather conditions.

Where specific situations have the potential to worsen, the Department Teacher-in-charge reviews the cut-off time at which steps will be taken to notify outside support services and initiate the communications system.

All relevant information is gathered, and the emergency response plan to call in outside help is set in motion - whether that be the immediate notification of the police, Department site manager or principal, office of the external provider (which might have its own procedures to follow), or some other previously documented strategy.

The implementation of the emergency response plan is delayed only if the supervisory team is confident that no imminent danger exists and that there is a reasonable expectation that the students will soon be found.

ADVICE FOR INDIVIDUAL GROUP MEMBERS

Prior to the bushwalking activity, students must be made aware of the following procedures should they and/or others become lost or separated from the group. They need to:

- stop, as continuing to walk will make it more difficult for searchers to locate them
- try to attract attention of the group by blowing their whistle, or shouting
- listen for a reply or signals from the rest of the walking group and/or searchers
- make themselves comfortable in a sheltered area
- mark their position with brightly-coloured articles or broken branches placed in a conspicuous location.



Department of
Education

APPENDIX G: CAMPING

EFFECTIVE: 21 JULY 2025

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CAMPING

This document contains specific requirements related to camping activities and must be read in conjunction with *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures*.

1. BACKGROUND

This document provides the mandated requirements for the activities outlined below.

Camping

Camping refers to staying overnight in a basic temporary shelter, such as a tent. This is usually in a natural setting. Camping includes a range of associated practical experiences (for example, bushcraft and camp-cookery) to extend learning.

When planning camping experiences that include other recreation and/or outdoor education activities, the mandated requirements in the relevant activity-specific documents must be met.

Residential Camp

A residential camp such as Broome Camp School, provides overnight shelter in a permanent structure such as a dormitory. If the residential camp includes practical camping experiences (for example bushcraft and camp-cookery) and/or recreation and outdoor education activities (for example swimming and bushwalking), the mandated requirements in this document, and any other activity-specific documents must be met.

Note: For residential school camps that do not include **any** practical camping experiences or recreation and outdoor education activities, these procedures do **not** apply. The Department Teacher-in-charge must refer to the relevant *Excursions in Public Schools* Procedures.

DEFINITIONS

ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR

Assists the Qualified Supervisor and or the Department Teacher-in-charge. Must have recent and relevant experience in the activity, at the level being offered to the students.

DEPARTMENT TEACHER-IN-CHARGE

The member of the teaching staff employed by the Department of Education (or an Approved Provider) and managing the school activity (for information relating to Approved Providers refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements*).

EXTERNAL PROVIDER

A business or individual paid by the school to provide a venue, service and/or expertise appropriate to a particular school activity; or a staff member of a TAFE college or a university who delivers any part of an educational program to students.

CAMPING

A form of overnight stay with a basic temporary shelter such as a tent, bush hut, bivvy or tarp, or no shelter at all, usually in a natural/bush setting, at locations with no or limited facilities.

QUALIFIED SUPERVISOR

Has the required qualifications, skill, experience and technical knowledge to instruct the activity.

REMOTE OR ISOLATED AREAS

Includes any location where medical emergency assistance is more than one hour away by road, air or water.

RESIDENTIAL CAMP

A camp that includes one or more recreation and outdoor education activities where students sleep in permanent facilities overnight, such as dormitory-style accommodation, with equipped kitchen facilities, showers and toilets (for example Broome Camp School).

SUPERVISORY TEAM

Adults who have accepted the responsibility to act in a supervisory role at the planned activity. Can include (but not be limited to) teachers and education assistants, external providers and parents.

2. ENVIRONMENT

The Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure that research is conducted into desired camping and residential camp locations well in advance, to ensure sites are suitable for group size, student capacity, skills, experience, the planned activities and the supervision required.

When selecting a camping site, consideration must be given to:

- observing any warning signs
- locating the group in an area near a fresh water supply
- selecting well-drained level ground
- sheltering from prevailing conditions
- avoiding camping directly underneath large, diseased or dead trees
- avoiding rivers, creek beds, swamps and flats that are subject to flooding
- avoiding fire dangers.

When pitching tents, consideration must be given to:

- erecting tents sufficiently apart to prevent rapid spread of fire in the campsite
- keeping tents a minimum of four (4) metres from the campfire
- visibility of guy ropes (for example, conspicuous objects can be tied around guy ropes to highlight the position of tents).

Some camping sites have a recommended maximum number of participants that must inform planning.

Groups of eight or more, that are staying overnight at Bibbulmun Track, Munda Biddi Trail or Cape to Cape Track camping sites, are required to complete and submit a Group Notification a minimum of 4 weeks prior to the activity. The *Department of Biodiversity, Conservations and Attractions* provides further information:

- Bibbulmun Track
- Munda Biddi Trail
- Cape to Cape Track

Many camping sites have access restrictions and written permission must be gained from the relevant authority (*Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions* regional office, local land management body, lease holders or private property owner). These organisations/owners can also be consulted for information about:

- route planning (including evacuation)
- alternative routes in the event of restricted access
- shelter, toilets, drinking water etc. availability at the location/venue
- procedures to follow when there is a risk of bad weather, storms, bushfires and/or other changes to the environment.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must access the [Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions \(DBCA\)](#) and [Park Alerts](#), regarding park closure alerts, trail status, any permit requirements and updates that may affect their proposed activity.

River crossings can be extremely hazardous. Groups **must not** attempt a river crossing if the location or other elements are considered to be dangerous (for example, during periods of flooding; where the depth, speed, bottom load or ability of the group is unknown; or in an estuarine crocodile habitat; see [Appendix F: Bushwalking](#) for further information).

WEATHER CONSIDERATIONS

Camping is not to be undertaken in any area where high alert weather conditions are forecast and/or any area where the fire danger rating is extreme or above. Refer to [Department of Fire and Emergency Services](#) and/or [EmergencyWA](#) for fire and smoke alerts, or fire danger ratings, or contact the local shire as part of an environmental check.

If camping during the fire restriction season, plan a route that allows for evacuation and confirm that the group has access to up-to-date fire information via radio, mobile or satellite phones providing bulletins from a manned base. Avoid commencing camping activities on a total fire ban day.

The following weather conditions/warnings must also be considered:

- severe weather events
- thunderstorm
- flooding
- coastal waters
- strong wind
- tropical cyclone advice
- extreme temperatures.

Weather conditions must be assessed and monitored:

- in the days leading up to the activity
- on the day of the activity
- during the activity.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must continue to assess conditions and comply with fire ban regulations. The supervisory team may need to modify, relocate or cancel the activity at any time. Check the [Bureau of Meteorology](#) for up-to-date conditions and weather warnings.

Guidance

Key sources of information to support planning might include:

- *the venue or site manager*
- *a local external provider*
- *people with specialist knowledge of the area or activity*
- *specialist activity organisations and clubs*
- *OutdoorsWA*
- *the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions*
- *the local ranger, land manager or property owner/lease holder*
- *other schools that have conducted similar activities in that location.*

3. CAPACITY OF STUDENTS

Prior to commencing camping activities, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that each student has the capacity to participate safely.

For all planned camping activities alternative, modified or adjusted activities must be provided for students who have limited capacity to participate.

Students with a disability or impairment may participate in desired activities provided adequate safety and control measures are implemented. Specific consideration is given to:

- the type and level of disability or impairment
- location and access
- providing adjustments so the student can access the curriculum activity on the same basis as their peers.

Students who have a medically diagnosed condition that may impact their safety must be cleared by a medical practitioner before they can participate.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must be aware of health care maintenance and/or any intensive health care needs of students, particularly allergic reactions to stings or bites. Protective clothing should be considered for students who are susceptible.

A re-assessment of students' capacity is undertaken if any circumstances surrounding the activity change. This includes any change in the condition of the environment, their medical fitness, or their capacity to undertake the activity.

4. STUDENT HEALTH CARE

Refer to [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) for further requirements.

5. ACTIVITIES

The full scope of the camping activities must be assessed before determining the areas to be used.

Before departure, and if practicable, students should be provided with opportunities to pitch and strike tents, test all equipment and demonstrate that they have the required items from the equipment list (identified by the school) for the anticipated conditions.

Health and hygiene practices

The Department Teacher-in-charge should encourage and promote the following:

- all students are instructed on the importance of good personal hygiene (for example, hand washing)
- sterilising hand gel is made available for hand sanitising purposes
- toilets and washing with detergent locations are located at least 100 metres away from the water supply and a discrete distance from campsites and defined tracks
- excreta and toilet paper are disposed of using a method that suits the area, size of the group, soil type, climate and time of year
- a toilet pit is constructed for large groups in areas of higher visitation
- sanitary products are carried out of the camping area
- wet sullage pits are dug well away from the campsite and 100m from water sources.

Food preparation and storage

The Department Teacher-in-charge must plan to ensure that food safety measures are in place whilst camping. These may include, but are not limited to:

- the appropriate selection of food that can be safely stored for the type, length and location of the activity, number of participants and any specific dietary, medical or allergy requirements
- the provision of appropriate equipment suitable for the hygienic preparation and serving of food
- participants must always wash or sanitise their hands before handling and cooking food
- all cooking and eating utensils are thoroughly cleaned immediately after each meal, dried, and packed away

- washing up water that contains detergent is carried out away from the campsite and disposed of in a wet sullage pit, 100m away from water sources
- all rubbish, including tins, aluminium foil, food scraps and plastics are carried out.

Camp fire and stove safety practices

Fire safety practices are determined and communicated to all participants.

Naked lights (for example, matches, candles and cooking stoves) **must not** be used as lighting inside tents.

Fires are potentially dangerous to participants and the environment. In some campgrounds, fires are not permitted at any time; at others, campfires are permitted with seasonal restrictions and in provided fire pits only.

If a fire is deemed necessary, the Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure that:

- they adhere to all fire restrictions/notices
- a minimum of a three (3) metre radius around a fire site be cleared (as specified by the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions)
- fire rings or fire buckets are utilised, if provided
- minimum impact fire techniques are used (as per Leave No Trace principles)
- conditions are deemed safe before lighting a fire
- the size of the fire is appropriate to the needs of the group for cooking/warmth
- the fire is built downwind and away from tents
- if possible, the fire is built in a previously used fireplace
- the fire is never left unattended
- flammable liquids are never poured onto a fire
- rocks are not used around a fire set on the ground
- all signs of the fire are removed by burying or scattering the ashes, when cold.

The use of fuel stoves is preferable for cooking.

Stoves powered by burning solid fuel are subject to the same restrictions as campfires: they must not be used at any campground, or at any time, when campfires are not permitted. Those powered by liquid or gas fuel can be used at any time unless a total fire ban has been declared.

Fuel for stoves is highly flammable and can explode if not handled correctly. Methylated spirit stoves are recommended, as they are easier to operate and less flammable.

Students should be instructed in the proper use of stoves to ensure that:

- fuel bottles are clearly marked, and a distinctive method is used to distinguish from drinking water bottles
- the cap of the fuel bottle is replaced and secured before lighting the stove
- fuel bottles are removed from possible ignition sources
- when in use, the stove is stable
- prior to use the stove strap is completely removed
- the stove is positioned at least four (4) metres away from foot traffic and flammable objects, particularly plastic ground sheets, backpacks, tents and sleeping bags
- a lit stove is never left unattended
- the stove is refuelled when it is not lit and is away from the cooking area to ensure any spilt fuel during refuelling cannot be accidentally ignited
- stoves must be totally extinguished and cold to touch before going to bed
- all stove parts are checked and accounted for, and the stove is cold when packed away.

Stoves must never be used in tents, due to the potential danger of asphyxiation, explosion and the flammability of equipment.

6. EQUIPMENT

All equipment must be checked to confirm it is appropriate to the activity, safe and in working order.

Prior to the camping trip, the Department Teacher-in-charge will confirm with students an equipment list that includes details of:

- sleeping gear (for example, sleeping bags, pillows, blankets, sheets)
- eating and drinking utensils
- footwear suitable for wet weather, walking or sporting activities and recreational use
- protective clothing or equipment appropriate to the requirements of the route and potential weather conditions (for example, a wide brimmed hat, waterproof jacket, sun protection, broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen, insect repellent, warm or (synthetic) thermal clothing, sunglasses etc.)
- specialist camping equipment (for example, tents, stoves) as required
- suitable and sufficient water carrying capacity.

Guidance

For further information, refer to *Australian Adventure Activity Good Practice Guide: Camping.*

Emergency equipment (for the group)

Prior to commencing the activity, the Department Teacher-in-charge confirms that all supervisors have access to:

- a waterproofed or laminated copy of the route, or a composite plan
- the *Risk Management Plan* and the *Emergency Response Plan* (see *Appendix B and C: in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures*)
- emergency communication equipment (as appropriate to the location), such as a mobile or satellite phone, details of the nearest landline, radio, Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) and/or Personal Location Beacon (PLB)
- appropriate and readily available first aid equipment. The first aid kit must contain items appropriate for the activities, location, size and needs of the group and duration of the activity
- tools for waste disposal
- accessible emergency equipment (for example, a whistle, torch, firelighters)
- a compass, waterproofed map, GPS or, dependent on location and reception, a relevant mobile phone application.

7. THE SUPERVISORY TEAM

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements* for further requirements.

8. EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements* and *Appendix D: External Provider Checklist*, for further requirements.

9. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team members possess appropriate skills in camping, navigation and bushcraft, and have the appropriate recent and relevant experience, to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during camping activities.

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements* for mandated general requirements that apply to all recreation and outdoor education activities:

- first aid qualifications
- evidence requirements for all qualifications, competencies and recent and relevant experience.

Minimum qualifications and/or formal training accreditations

The Qualified Supervisor must hold a relevant first aid certificate including current cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) accreditation. Where the group is in an remote or isolated area, a member of the supervisory team must have appropriate first aid qualifications. (Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements in the *Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures*). Remote or isolated areas may include any location where medical emergency assistance might be more than one hour away, by road, air or water.

Skills and experience

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team:

- has recent and relevant experience in the activity at the level being offered to students
- has skills in interpreting and responding to weather conditions
- has first aid and CPR qualifications
- has competency in, and understands, the emergency response plan and supervision responsibilities.

Guidance

It is recommended that supervisors maintain evidence of their recent experience in relevant camping activities through the use of a logbook, or similar.

10. MINIMUM LEVELS OF SUPERVISION

Group sizes and supervision levels are determined after considering the:

- purpose of the activity
- age, capacity, experience and skills of each student
- gender of participating students
- qualifications, capacity and experience of the supervisor(s)
- type and number of activities being undertaken
- students' medical conditions, disabilities or impairments
- land manager restrictions
- weather conditions
- nature of the environment.

For all camping activities regardless of age of participants or group size, the minimum level of supervision is:

- two supervisors at all times
- one of these supervisors must have the required qualifications.

CAMPING

Kindergarten - Year 3

Must have a minimum of two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every 5 students or part thereof (inclusive of the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 4 - 6

Must have a minimum of two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every 8 students or part thereof (inclusive of the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

Must have a minimum of two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every 11 students or part thereof (inclusive of the Qualified Supervisor).

RESIDENTIAL CAMP

Kindergarten - Year 3

Must have a minimum of two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every 6 students or part thereof (inclusive of the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 4 - 6

Must have a minimum of two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every 9 students or part thereof (inclusive of the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

Must have a minimum of two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every 11 students or part thereof (inclusive of the Qualified Supervisor).

The table below illustrates the minimum supervision requirements for common group sizes. Groups may be larger than those indicated here but must remain within the prescribed supervision ratios and any limits set out earlier in this document.

Type	Year level	Number of students	Qualified Supervisor	Assistant Supervisor	Total supervisory team
Camping	K - 3	1 - 10	1	1	2
		11 - 15	1	2	3
		16 - 20	1	3	4
		21 - 22	1	4	5
		23 - 25	2	3	5
	4 - 6	1 - 16	1	1	2
		17 - 22	1	2	3
		23 - 24	2	1	3
		25 - 32	2	2	4
	7 - 12	1 - 22	1	1	2
		23 - 33	2	1	3
Residential camp	K - 3	1 - 12	1	1	2
		13 - 18	1	2	3
		19 - 22	1	2	3
		23 - 24	2	2	4
		25 - 30	2	3	5
	4 - 6	1 - 18	1	1	2
		19 - 22	1	2	3
		23 - 27	2	1	3
		28 - 36	2	2	4
	7 - 12	1 - 22	1	1	2
		23 - 33	2	1	3
		34 - 44	2	2	4

All overnight camping and residential camp activities

When considering an overnight stay (camping or residential camp), the Department Teacher-in-charge must take into account the:

- supervisory and accommodation arrangements, especially for sleeping and ablutions needs of all students, including gender diverse students
- selection of supervisors, to reflect the demographics of the group

- supervisors **must not** be placed in a position where there is potential for allegations of improper conduct, or where the propriety of their behaviour could be questioned
- supervisors must be made aware of their duty of care requirements when they are supervising students overnight - these are maintained throughout
- supervisors that may be required to take responsibility for students at short notice in the event of an emergency.

11. SUPERVISION STRATEGIES

Supervision strategies must be confirmed by the Department Teacher-in-charge to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students is maintained at all times.

Supervisory strategies for camping and residential camp activities must be considered in accordance with the:

- age of the students
- experience and ability of the students
- student medical conditions, disabilities or impairments
- capacity of the supervisor(s), for example, competence and experience
- type or purpose of the activity to be undertaken
- nature of the environment
- location (local or remote) of the activity
- weather and climate.

Once at the site, supervisors must check the camping site regularly to confirm that it is kept clean of rubbish and free from hazards such as cooking activities in high traffic areas.

12. IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS

In all settings, students should always be clearly visible.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must employ systems for identifying students that may include the wearing of school shirts, uniforms, school or other hats, vests, sashes, armbands, name tags and/or stickers.

Each identification system may be used in combination with others.

Supervisors should wear coloured clothing that promotes visibility.

Refer to [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) for further requirements.

13. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Refer to [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) for further requirements.

14. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Refer to [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) and [Appendix B: Risk Management Plan](#) for further requirements.

15. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Refer to [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) and [Appendix C: Emergency Management Plan](#) for further requirements.

16. BRIEFING STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that all participants are briefed about:

- the educational purpose (learning intentions) and the cooperative nature of the activity
- components of the activity (including skills required)
- standards of behaviour, including roles and responsibilities

- hazard identification and safety requirements
- buddy practices and procedures that will be followed if members of the party become lost or separated from the group (refer to Appendix F: Bushwalking - Appendix 1)
- physical boundaries marked for the activity
- communication signals to gain attention and request assistance
- emergency and evacuation procedures
- minimal impact principles for that location (see Leave No Trace principles).

In addition to the above, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team have been briefed about the following:

- the role and location of supervisors
- maintaining supervision ratios (including of those students not involved in the activity)
- modified/adjusted activity requirements for students with a disability or impairment
- the system for identifying students and supervisors
- student-specific medical requirements
- conditions associated with hypothermia, sunburn and dehydration
- communication strategies that will be used throughout the activity, including designated signals to gain the attention of the whole group, and to identify when emergency assistance is required
- location of first aid kit and emergency/rescue equipment
- appropriate clothing for the activity and weather conditions, including thermal and sun protection
- aspects of the environment and expected weather conditions
- the route to be followed including pre-determined stops and/or meeting points along the way (if applicable).

Special information sessions must be arranged for students or staff who were absent from preparatory briefings.

17. INFORMED CONSENT

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

Site managers at the Department Camp School must adhere to all Department policies and procedures.

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APPENDIX H: CAVING

EFFECTIVE: 21 JULY 2025

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CAVING

This document contains specific requirements related to caving activities and must be read in conjunction with *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures*.

1. BACKGROUND

Caving involves the exploration of underground passages and caverns, known as caves, that have been created by natural processes over time. Caves vary in size, depth, complexity and fragility and can be found in diverse environments including metropolitan suburbs, coastal and remote regions.

Challenges common to all caves include the absence of natural light and communication difficulties with the surface. Other features can include water hazards, rock stability, air quality, vertical climbs, wildlife and tight passages.

Typically, caving is described as: horizontal caving or vertical caving.

Separate mandated requirements in the relevant activity specific documents should be consulted if the following activities are proposed within the caving program:

- *Appendix E: Abseiling and Climbing*
- *Appendix N: Ropes Courses and Bouldering*
- *Appendix S: Swimming and Water Based Activities* (where water is involved - noting cave diving is prohibited).

DEFINITIONS

ARTIFICIAL CAVE

A construction that is designed to mimic the environmental conditions of natural caves. Often used for introductory caving activities.

ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR

Assists the Qualified Supervisor and/or Department Teacher-in-charge. Must have recent and relevant experience in the activity, at the level being offered to the students.

DEPARTMENT TEACHER-IN-CHARGE

The member of the teaching staff employed by the Department of Education (or an Approved Provider) and managing the school activity (for information relating to Approved Providers refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements*).

FOUL AIR/BAD AIR

A cave's atmosphere which has a noticeable, abnormal, physiological effect on humans. In limestone caves, 'foul air' can be described as containing greater than 0.5% carbon dioxide and/or lower than 18% oxygen by volume.

HORIZONTAL CAVING

Involves crawling through openings, scrambling up and down rock faces with or without fixed ladders.

NATURAL CAVE

Naturally formed cave, with established tracks and minimal risk of foul air and water hazards.

TOURIST CAVE

A managed cave that has been made safely accessible to the general public for guided or self-guided visits, after a fee is paid. Usually has suitable infrastructure (such as lighting, constructed stairs and handrails) so that it requires little to no caving experience to enter.

VERTICAL CAVING

Involves using ropes, caving ladders and other descending/ascending equipment to enter, explore and/or exit caves.

WILD CAVING

Caves that are not used commercially, have few or no provisions and tracks are unmarked. Often situated on private property or remote/isolated areas and permits for use of these caves are usually required.

2. ENVIRONMENT

The Department Teacher-in-charge must determine the suitability of the venue after considering each student's capacity, skills and experience, the planned activity and the supervision required.

Specific attention is given to the physical characteristics of the site (for example, exposure, access and level of difficulty, loose rock, texture) and to potential risk points where Single Ropes Techniques (SRT) will take place as part of the caving activity.

The relevant Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions regional office, management agency; or private land owner; and/or caving club must be contacted to establish conditions that apply for entry to, and usage of a cave.

The supervisory team must meet all requirements specified by land managers/owners.

Any speleological assessment of the cave environment must be performed under the guidance of recognised management and the Western Australian Speleological Group.

Students must not be involved in caving activities in areas that have a history of consistent rock fall.

A cave with a history of foul air must not be included in any program.

A further risk management assessment must take place before conducting caving activities if rainfall has occurred in the local area in the previous 48 hours or is predicted within twelve (12) hours of entry into the cave system.

The weather forecast must be checked before and also regularly throughout the activity, as it may be necessary to cancel, or modify the activity at any time.

If in an isolated area or in the event of a program change, details of the caving activity are left with a relevant authority such as the police, a Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions ranger, land manager or responsible community member. Details should include the:

- name of the party and Department Teacher-in-charge and method of contact
- number of participants
- vehicle registration number(s)
- date
- cave entry time, and the estimated time of return.

It is advisable that the above information also be left on a relevant vehicle dashboard.

All supervisors should be familiar with the ASF Minimal Impact Caving Code (see Western Australian Speleological Group or the Australian Speleological Federation).

Many sites have access restrictions. Written permission must be gained from the relevant authority (Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions regional office, local land management body, lease holders or private property owner). These organisations/owners can also be consulted for information about:

- route planning (including evacuation)
- alternative routes in the event of restricted access
- shelter, toilets, drinking water etc. availability at the location/venue
- procedures to follow when there is a risk of bad weather, storms, bushfires and/or other changes to the environment.

3. CAPACITY OF STUDENTS

Caving, other than a visit to a tourist cave or artificial cave, is not suitable for primary students.

Secondary students may participate in all caving activities, providing that each student has been assessed by the Department Teacher-in-charge and is deemed to have the physical capacity, caving skills and single rope techniques needed to participate safely in the activity, at that particular location.

Alternative, modified or adjusted activities should be provided for students who have limited capacity to participate.

Students with a disability or impairment may participate in desired activities provided adequate safety and control measures are implemented. Specific consideration is given to:

- the type and level of disability or impairment
- the location and access
- providing curriculum adjustments so the student can access the curriculum activity on the same basis as their peers.

Students who have a medically diagnosed condition that may impact on their safety must be cleared by a medical practitioner before they can participate.

Prior to the commencement of the activity, it is confirmed that no participants are known to have reactions to dark and/or confined spaces.

4. STUDENT HEALTH CARE

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

5. ACTIVITIES

Novices must only attempt the simplest of caves. Wild caving is not permitted for primary school students.

Activities in wild caves that have few or no provisions for the general public should only occur if the students are part of a program that has an established objective to progress to this level of caving. Students can only participate if the Department Teacher-in-charge deems that each student has developed the technical skills, knowledge, understandings, attitudes and values necessary to meet the high levels of responsibility and extensive preparation required to use these types of caves.

Abseiling, climbing and other activities often form part of a caving program. Refer to the relevant activity specific document to determine the qualifications and supervision requirements that apply. A pre-visit to the proposed cave would identify sensitive features and the best anchor points, reducing the need for unnecessary exploration.

Cave entrances and passages **must not** be excavated or enlarged to facilitate entry.

Water levels in sumps **must not** be modified, nor stream flows diverted without the prior consent of the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions or the land manager/owner.

Established or marked routes are used where they exist. Tracks are followed and care is taken to avoid needless deposition of mud. Supervisors must confirm that participants do not go exploring or try to find their own exit from a cave.

Caves must not be disfigured by markings and mud throwing is prohibited.

Cave diving activities are prohibited.

Caving activities are conducted in ways that prevent damage to speleothems, sediments, biota and other natural phenomena. Sampling of flora, fauna, palaeontological or archaeological material, dead or alive, does not occur without special permit approval.

For all caving activities, a minimal approach should be adopted, (as per Leave No Trace principles) including:

- appropriate disposal of human waste
- travelling on durable surfaces
- leaving 'found artefacts' behind
- respecting all abiotic and biotic features
- being considerate of other visitors
- not exceeding the group size specified by land managers.

Eating of food in caves should be avoided. If food is eaten in a cave, care is taken that small food fragments are not dropped as this may impact on cave biota. Students carry a plastic bag to eat over and to catch food fragments. This can then be folded up, stowed and removed from the cave.

Participants **must not** light fires in caves.

6. EQUIPMENT

It is recommended that supervisors carry:

- at least two spare light sources
- a pencil and notebook
- a watch.

The Qualified Supervisor must check equipment to confirm that it is appropriate to the activity, safe and in working order. Safety checks are conducted before, and at critical times throughout, the activity.

Emergency equipment must be readily accessible. The equipment may be left in a vehicle (however, all supervisors should know the location of the key if the vehicle is locked) or at the cave entrance.

Appropriate first aid equipment must be readily accessible. The first aid kit must include items that are appropriate for the activity, size and needs of the group and duration of the activity.

Each participant must wear appropriate clothing and fully enclosed footwear. Participants should also wear a hard-shell climbing, caving or roping helmet with a secure chinstrap that meets the relevant Australian Standard.

All participants have access to a personal light source, preferably helmet-mounted.

If helmet-mounted lights are not available, a carry strap or attachment should be used on the main light source.

Guidance

For further information, refer to [Australian Adventure Activity Good Practice Guide: Caving](#)

Support equipment should include:

- comprehensive first aid equipment, to be left in a vehicle or at the cave entrance
- equipment to keep someone warm if required (space blanket or sleeping bag)
- food, fuel, a stove and water.

Drinking water should be available at all times (it is recommended that supervisors carry a supply of water).

Purpose designed equipment (including ropes) that meets appropriate Australian Standards must be used for all activities that involve abseiling, climbing and the use of ropes.

Manufacturer's equipment instructions must also be taken into consideration.

Ropes, tapes, cords, harnesses, helmets and other specialist equipment specific to the activity must be retired after five years, unless the manufacturer specifies a different service life. Equipment must not be used if there is any doubt about its integrity.

If using ropes, each participant must wear a correctly fitting harness and appropriate gloves of the correct size while handling moving rope. Gloves prevent overheating/injury of the hands and possible loss of rope control. Gloves are not required where friction devices such as Slow-Go pulleys and other controls are used in the belay system.

7. THE SUPERVISORY TEAM

Refer to [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) for further requirements.

8. EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure that external providers are made aware of the documentation they need to provide, or that must be sighted.

External providers must follow all mandated requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures and will be asked to supply copies of certain documentation, and/or make them available for the Department Teacher-in-charge to sight. External providers should familiarise themselves with [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) and [Appendix D: External Provider Checklist](#).

9. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team members possess skills in caving, navigation and have the appropriate experience, knowledge and skills to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during caving activities.

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for mandated first aid and CPR accreditation requirements and supervisory team competencies.

At least one member of the supervisory team must hold a current relevant first aid certificate including current cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) accreditation. Where the group is in an isolated or remote area, a member of the supervisory team must have the appropriate first aid qualifications for the location (for example, remote, isolated, wilderness first aid). Remote or isolated areas may include any location where medical emergency assistance might be more than one hour away, by road, air or water.

No formal caving qualifications are required for **artificial caving** or **tourist cave** activities.

The Qualified Supervisor must hold a current activity specific qualification for **natural** and **wild caving** AND maintain proof of experience (per annum).

Minimum qualifications that the Qualified Supervisor must have, for natural and wild caving activities, include, but are not limited to:	<u>AND</u> proof of experience:
A current, activity-specific qualification or attainment of competencies gained through a recognised tertiary institution or Registered Training Organisation, including: • relevant units in Caving completed as a part of a <i>Certificate III</i> (or higher) in <i>Outdoor Recreation or Leadership</i> • <i>Trip Leader</i> qualification awarded by a member club of the Australian Speleological Federation • <i>Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions Cave Leader S2</i> (Horizontal Access) • <i>Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions Cave Leader S3</i> qualification (Vertical Access, also required relevant roping qualifications - see Abseiling and Climbing specific activity documents) • an equivalent qualification as recognised by the Director General.	• Maintain proof of logged experience per annum.

For Single Rope Technique activities conducted while vertical caving, at least one member of the supervisory team must have a qualification specified in Abseiling and Climbing, be familiar with the hazards of abseiling and climbing within a caving context and be able to affect a support and rescue.

At least one member of the supervisory team must also be competent in dealing with emergencies that are consistent with the type of activity and site being used.

Guidance

It is recommended that supervisors maintain evidence of their currency and experience through the use of a logbook, or similar.

10. MINIMUM LEVELS OF SUPERVISION

Group sizes and supervision levels are determined after considering the:

- age, capacity, experience and skills of each student
- qualifications, capacity and experience of the supervisor(s)
- types of activities to be undertaken
- students' medical conditions, disabilities or impairments
- nature of the environment.

Greater supervision may be required for less able students.

Minimum supervisory requirements and maximum group sizes specified by cave managers must be adhered to at all times.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that an appropriate duty of care, including the provision of adequate supervision, is provided to students who are not engaged in activities.

For all caving activities regardless of age of participants, the minimum level of supervision is:

- two supervisors at all times
- one of these supervisors must be a Qualified Supervisor with location specific experience.

For larger groups, consideration should be given to splitting the groups.

ARTIFICIAL CAVE

Kindergarten - Year 12

Must have two supervisors at all times.

- One supervisor for every 10 students or part thereof.

TOURIST CAVE

Kindergarten - Year 3

Must have a minimum of three supervisors at all times.

- One supervisor for every 10 students or part thereof.

Year 4 - 12

Must have two supervisors at all times:

- One supervisor for every 10 students or part thereof.

NATURAL CAVE

Kindergarten - Year 3

This activity is not permitted for students in Kindergarten - Year 3.

Year 4 - 6

Must have a minimum of three supervisors at all times:

- One Qualified Supervisor for every 20 students or part thereof; and
- One supervisor for every six students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

Must have two supervisors at all times:

- One Qualified Supervisor for every 20 students or part thereof; and
- One supervisor for every 10 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

WILD CAVE

Kindergarten - Year 6

This activity is not permitted for students in Kindergarten - Year 6.

Year 7 - 12

Must have two supervisors at all times:

- One Qualified Supervisor for every 12 students or part thereof; and
- One supervisor for every six students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

The following table illustrates minimum supervision requirements for common group sizes. Groups may be larger than those indicated here but must remain within the prescribed supervision ratios and any limits set out earlier in this document.

Year level	Environment	Number of students	Qualified Supervisor	Assistant Supervisor	Total supervisory team
K - 12	Artificial caving	1 - 20	0	2	2
K - 3	Tourist caving	1-30	0	3	3
	Natural caving and wild caving	Not permitted			
4 - 6	Natural caving	1 - 18	1	2	3
		19 - 20	1	3	4
		21 - 24	3	1	4
		25 - 30	3	2	5
	Wild caving	Not permitted			
4 - 12	Tourist caving	1-20	0	2	2
7 - 12	Natural caving	1 - 20	1	1	2
		21 - 30	2	1	3
		30 - 40	2	2	4
	Wild caving Please contact landowners or DCBA for maximum participant numbers, any restrictions and for permits to enter all wild caves.	1 - 12	1	1	2
		13 - 18	2	1	3
		19 - 24	2	2	4
		25 - 30	3	2	5

Refer to [Appendix E: Abseiling and Climbing](#) for qualifications and supervisory requirements that apply where SRT are used whilst caving.

11. SUPERVISION STRATEGIES

Supervision strategies must be confirmed by the Department Teacher-in-charge to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students is maintained at all times.

Supervision strategies must also address circumstances where students are not in clear view of the supervisors.

Supervisors remain aware of each participant's position and their condition and maintain direct communication at all times. A *whip and tail* configuration will help the group remain connected.

Inexperienced students should remain close to a supervisor and/or experienced caver who can assist when required.

The group caves at the pace of the slowest caver.

Team members help each other through the cave. Participants should not split up unless doing so reduces their impact on the cave. If the bigger group splits up, minimum supervision requirements still apply; as do appropriate safety, first aid, and communication equipment requirements. One supervisor remains behind the last student or participant at all times.

Students who do not display an appropriately responsible attitude are to be removed from the activity.

12. IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

13. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

14. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix B: Risk Management Plan for further requirements.

15. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix C: Emergency Management Plan for further requirements.

16. BRIEFING STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that all participants are briefed about:

- the educational purpose (learning intentions) and the cooperative nature of the activity
- components of the activity (including skills required)
- standards of behaviour, including roles and responsibilities
- hazard identification and safety requirements
- buddy practices and procedures that will be followed if members of the party become lost or separated from the group
- physical boundaries marked for the activity
- communication signals to gain attention and request assistance
- emergency and evacuation procedures
- minimal impact principles for that location (Leave No Trace principles).

In addition to the above, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team have been briefed about the following:

- the role and location of supervisors
- maintaining supervision ratios (including of those students not involved in the activity)
- modified/adjusted activity requirements for students with a disability or impairment
- the system for identifying students and supervisors
- student-specific medical requirements
- conditions associated with hypothermia and dehydration
- communication strategies that will be used throughout the activity, including designated signals to gain the attention of the whole group, and to identify when emergency assistance is required
- location of first aid kit and emergency/rescue equipment
- appropriate clothing for the activity and weather conditions
- aspects of the environment and expected weather conditions
- the route to be followed.

Special information sessions must be arranged for students or staff who were absent from preparatory briefings.

17. INFORMED CONSENT

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.



Department of
Education

APPENDIX I: CYCLING, CYCLE TOURING AND MOUNTAIN BIKING

EFFECTIVE: 21 JULY 2025

VERSION: 3.1

CYCLING, CYCLE TOURING AND MOUNTAIN BIKING

This document contains specific requirements related to cycling activities and must be read in conjunction with *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures*.

1. BACKGROUND

Cycling activities include road safety sessions, cycle touring, mountain biking (free ride, BMX, cycle cross, downhill, gravity enduro, all mountain, cross country, dirt jumping, four cross) and road and track racing.

DEFINITIONS

ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR

Assists the Qualified Supervisor and or Department Teacher-in-charge. Must have recent and relevant experience in the activity, at the level being offered to the students.

BMX (BICYCLE MOTORCROSS)

Stunt riding on rough ground or over an obstacle course. Performed on an off-road bike used for both racing and stunt riding.

CYCLE TOUR/EXPEDITION

A highly organised cycling event which incorporates appropriate support or training and preparation to enable it to be conducted over longer distances. Cycle tours may be conducted for more than one day and involve overnight stays.

DEPARTMENT TEACHER-IN-CHARGE

A member of staff employed by the Department of Education (or an Approved Provider) and is to manage the school activity (for information relating to Approved Providers refer to Appendix A: General Requirements).

LOW LEVEL RIDING COMPETENCY - ON SCHOOL SITE

On school grounds: paved, bitumised, concrete, or sport court areas; bike paths and foot paths.

Off-road: on school oval/grassed area or wide fire trails with a gentle gradient and a smooth surface that is free of obstacles.

LOW LEVEL RIDING COMPETENCY - OFF SCHOOL SITE

Off school grounds: on low traffic local bike paths and foot paths.

Off-road: on fire trails with a gentle gradient and a smooth surface that is free of obstacles.

Note: Rottneest Island roads are classed as low traffic roads, requiring low level riding competencies.

MODERATE LEVEL RIDING COMPETENCY

On-road: no or low to minimal traffic.

Off-road: combination of fire road or wide single track with a gentle gradient relatively free of unavoidable obstacles.

HIGH LEVEL RIDING COMPETENCY

On-road: medium to high traffic areas, open road, cycle touring; BMX tracks and courses.

Off-road: single trail with moderate to steep gradients, variable surfaces (including rocky or loose tread) and obstacles (including logs, roots and rocks).

MOUNTAIN BIKING.

The act of riding on rough terrain typically off-road. Performed on a rated bicycle of stronger frame and thicker knobby tyres.

QUALIFIED SUPERVISOR

Has the required qualifications, skill, experience and technical knowledge to instruct the activity.

REMOTE OR ISOLATED AREAS

Includes any location where medical emergency assistance is more than one hour away by road, air and/or water.

ROAD CYCLING

Recreational and racing cycling on a road, where the cyclist is expected to obey the same rules and laws as vehicle drivers.

SUPERVISORY TEAM

All adults who have a supervisory role at the activity.

TRACK CYCLING

The act of riding on a flat area such as a minor road or track which is free of rocks, potholes or possible hazards, sufficient in size to enable the safe passing of riders, and isolated from pedestrians or traffic.

2. ENVIRONMENT

Prior to commencing the program, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory group have recent and relevant experience specific to the planned activity and location.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must determine the suitability of the venue or route, after considering each student's capacity, skills and experience, the planned activity and the supervision required.

When assessing the suitability of a location, access to resources, services and facilities need to be also considered (e.g. shelter, toilets, water, external communication and assistance).

Some locations/trails have a recommended maximum number of participants. Research desired locations/trails well in advance to confirm sites are suitable for group size and competency levels.

The route should be 'staged' to allow frequent rest stops.

A support or pick up vehicle is required to be on standby as a precautionary measure (refer to the *Equipment* section in this document).

The bicycle type must be suitable for the location and environment, for example when using a specialised track bike, riding must be confined to a track or velodrome.

Permission may be needed before using a velodrome or when mountain biking in off-road locations, especially on reserves, private property or national parks. Where riding is allowed in national parks, permission from the relevant Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions office is required (groups are to complete the Lawful authority form to conduct non-commercial activities on CALM Act land and submit it for approval). Trails specified as walking or equestrian trails are not to be used.

If using the Munda Biddi Trail (or other mountain bike trails such as, the Kalamunda Circuits) the Department of Education Teacher-in-charge must consult the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions or Emergency WA regarding fire bans, smoke, park closure alerts and updates for events that may affect the proposed activity.

Guidance

Further information about mountain biking trails can be found on the [Trails WA](#) and [WestCycle](#) websites.

Many sites have access restrictions. Written permission must be gained from the relevant authority ([Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions](#), regional office, local land management body, lease holders or private property owner). These organisations/owners can also be consulted for information about:

- route planning (including evacuation)
- alternative routes in the event of restricted access
- shelter, toilets, drinking water (etc.) availability at the location/venue
- procedures to follow when there is a risk of bad weather, storms, bushfires and/or other changes to the environment.

Weather Considerations

Weather conditions must be assessed and monitored:

- in the days leading up to the activity
- on the day of the activity
- throughout the activity.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must continue to assess conditions and comply with fire ban regulations. The supervisory team may need to modify, relocate or cancel the activity at any time. Check the Bureau of Meteorology for up-to-date conditions and weather warnings.

Cycling activities are not to be undertaken in any area where high alert weather conditions are forecast and or any area where the fire danger rating is extreme or above. Refer to [Department of Fire and Emergency Services or EmergencyWA](#) for fire alerts or fire danger ratings. Alternatively, contact the local shire as part of an environmental check.

If conducting a cycling activity during the fire restriction season, the Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure a route is planned that allows for evacuation and confirm that the group has access to current fire information via radio, mobile or satellite phones.

Road and track cycling

A flat area such as a minor road or track which is free of rocks, potholes or possible hazards, sufficient in size to enable the safe passing of riders, and isolated from pedestrians or traffic, is preferred for instructional purposes.

Designated bicycle paths or vehicle free circuits should be used in preference to public roads. The route must minimise exposure to heavy traffic or any particularly hazardous or busy areas. Alternative routes are selected if there is any doubt regarding access.

BMX riding

It is recommended that BMX riding be conducted at purpose-built BMX facilities.

Mountain bike riding

Trails dry at different speeds, depending on the design features and dirt. As with all riding, supervisors must conduct risk assessments, appropriate to the level of trail and environmental conditions, prior to and during the delivery of any mountain biking program.

Students should not race on the course.

Guidance

Sources of information may include:

- *the venue manager*
- *the local ranger or land manager*
- *Westcycle - the peak body for cycling in WA*
- *local cycling clubs and sporting organisations that can be found on the Westcycle website*
- *other experienced cyclists*
- *local Police*
- *other schools that have conducted similar activities at that location*
- *external providers*
- *Visitor Centres such as Dwellingup, Northcliffe, Pemberton, Karratha, Collie or Margaret River*
- *Outdoors WA.*

Some of these agencies may also be consulted for assistance in route planning.

3. CAPACITY OF STUDENTS

Prior to commencing any cycling or cycle touring activity, the Department Teacher-in-charge must:

- confirm that each student has the capacity and any required cycling and road safety skills to participate safely
- determine if additional skills are required to safely participate.

Alternative, modified or adjusted activities should be provided for students who have limited capacity to participate.

Students who have a medically diagnosed condition that may impact their safety must be cleared by a medical practitioner before they can participate.

Students must not ride on public roads unless they can demonstrate the required lead-up skills and:

- have demonstrated an adequate understanding of likely traffic conditions
- have demonstrated the ability to respond appropriately to potential hazards
- have the physical and cognitive skills to manage the road traffic environment safely while cycling
- are fully conversant with, and adhere to, all Western Australian traffic regulations including the Road Safety Commission's bicycle rules, standards and safety.

The capacity and experience of participating students must be taken into account when planning a mountain bike activity, particularly if there are a number of extreme inclines and sharp corners.

Guidance

Where possible, all students should have previously participated in a bike education skills-based program and have knowledge of basic bicycle maintenance, applicable to the activity and location.

Students should demonstrate a level of fitness appropriate to the type of cycling activity being undertaken. For extended tours, training should include fitness and distance riding activities, as well as cycling practice on uneven surfaces and steep gradients.

Students should be familiar with the techniques of cycle touring, where applicable. These techniques should be practiced in a variety of contexts and terrains prior to departure and should include practical exercises in bicycle control and maintenance.

Longer trips should be divided into sections to allow frequent rest stops.

4. STUDENT HEALTH CARE

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

5. ACTIVITIES

Cycling activities conducted on the road with students under the age of nine years, are not recommended. This does not apply to Rottnest Island roads.

Cycle touring that involves long sections of road travel is not recommended for students under the age of 12 years.

Students must be instructed in the correct lead up skills, including the effective use of brakes, gears and safe group riding techniques. Students should also be instructed to use cycling hand signals (for example, when overtaking, cornering, slowing, stopping and signalling fellow riders of hazards) or verbal signalling, such as when students are mountain bike riding and need to keep their hands on the handlebars.

Speed must be monitored at all times and appropriate instruction provided. Particular attention is paid to speed and road position, especially on steep downhill grades.

Road considerations

Where heavy traffic is likely to be encountered, a support vehicle must follow the group and display a sign to warn other road users of the cycling party.

Groups of riders must have appropriate intervals between them, so traffic flow is not affected.

Special care is taken when cycling during low visibility such as at dawn and dusk, or when it is raining. Night riding is not permitted.

Note: Rottnest Island roads are classified as low traffic roads, requiring low level riding competencies. A minimal number of commercial vehicles operate on the island and the roads provide a smooth, safe environment for students to move from one point to another. A risk assessment must form part of the planning process by the Department Teacher-in-charge.

Guidance

Weather conditions are monitored for their impact on road conditions in order to determine when to commence (and finish) cycling activities.

Caution and courtesy are needed on bicycle and shared pedestrian paths, particularly where paths crossroads.

Regular rest and refreshment breaks are to be scheduled, particularly for long trips. Route briefings should be conducted at rest stops.

Where events (for example, bikeathons, duathlons and triathlons) are conducted off school site, the Department Teacher-in-charge notifies and liaises with relevant clubs, the local government authority, the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and WA police to gain all relevant permits.

6. EQUIPMENT

Each student must have a correctly sized, roadworthy bicycle suitable for the activity, that fulfils all legal requirements and has well-maintained brakes, tyres, chains and gears. As a minimum, the suitability of a bicycle should include a thorough inspection which considers the frame size, seat position and height, and seat to handlebar distance, to verify that the rider can operate the brakes and gears effectively.

Safety, repairs and maintenance

The Qualified Supervisor must confirm prior to the commencement of the activity, that the equipment is safe, using a pre-ride checklist or similar.

Students must be instructed on how to conduct a safety check of their bicycle. The safety check must then be conducted at the beginning of each lesson (tyre pressure, tyre condition, gear system operation, steering mechanism, and pedal condition). It is recommended that front and rear lights be fitted and used when vision or safety is compromised. Students should also check the adjustment of their helmet and the condition of the inner and outer shell of their helmet.

Detected faults should be recorded. In the event that a student's personal bike has been identified to have a fault, a list of detected faults is to be sent home to parents/carers for repair. A copy of the report should be kept by a nominated supervisor as a permanent record.

If the parent does not make the required repairs or adjustments, the bicycle is not to be used in the program until such time as repairs and adjustments have been made.

Students must not be permitted to ride a bicycle that fails a mechanical inspection and/or is known to be unsafe or incorrectly sized.

All students on day trips or expeditions should have appropriate equipment for personal safety and bike maintenance.

Students should be taught how to maintain their bicycles.

Handlebar tape and plugs must be fitted to the bicycle for safety.

Bicycles must conform to the relevant Australian Standard or specifications.

Bicycles used for BMX activities must have adequately padded handlebars, cross bar and a goose neck. Knee and elbow pads, gloves, closed shoes, long sleeved top and long pants must be worn.

Support vehicle

If a support vehicle is used, it must be registered and display a sign that warns motorists that cyclists are on the road.

During touring activities, a support vehicle must accompany the group. The vehicle must be available to transport tired or injured riders, defective bicycles, as well as be present for safety reasons at regular intervals. The support vehicle must carry bicycle repair equipment as well as communication and emergency equipment.

First aid equipment must be readily accessible. It must include items appropriate to the activity, environment, size and needs of the party and duration of the activity. First aid equipment must be carried by a supervisor, preferably at the rear of the group.

Appropriate equipment and clothing

Students should be encouraged to wear brightly coloured, highly visible and/or reflective, close-fitting clothing that suits weather conditions, strikes a balance between ventilation and protection (for example shorts, aerobic pants or cycling knicks). Avoid wearing loose or flowing clothing that can catch on the bike's chain, gears or wheels.

All participants must wear an appropriately sized, correctly fitted helmet that adheres to the relevant Australian Standard. The helmet must be fitted and positioned correctly, with chinstraps fastened securely at all times.

Gloves are recommended for road, mountain bike riding and track cycling as they absorb vibration and protect the hands.

Appropriate, hard-soled, closed footwear must be worn.

Mobile phones must be available for use in an emergency situation on all rides (with allowance made for the fact that they do not operate in all localities). Satellite phones and/or UHF radios should be used where there is no mobile phone coverage.

A comprehensive tool kit and spares must be carried on all trips. Consideration should be given to equipment needs appropriate to the environment and duration of the activity.

Guidance

For further information, refer to Australian Adventure Activity Good Practice Guide: Cycling and Mountain Biking.

Each cyclist should carry a waterproofed map of the route, water bottle and energy food in a bike carrier, pannier, day pack or hydration backpack. Insect repellent, a plastic bag for rubbish and a small, personal first aid kit may also be useful.

For road cycling, all participants should carry a basic tool kit containing spanners or allen/hex keys that suit their bicycle, a puncture repair kit, a spare inner tube and pump. Should a student not have a kit, he/she should travel with a buddy who does.

Students should apply a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen as per manufacturer's instructions.

Students who own sunglasses should be encouraged to bring and wear them when required.

Touring and events

Consideration should be given to placing signs on the roadside at the start and finish of the activity and on significant roads entering the proposed route, to warn members of the public that there will be cyclists on the road. Local police should be advised of the activity, date, time and route, prior to the commencement of the event.

When touring, all gear should be carried securely in panniers or day packs. Handlebar bags designed for small, light items can be used for maps, phones, cameras and snacks only. Otherwise, no gear should be carried on the handlebars.

7. THE SUPERVISORY TEAM

Refer to [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) for further requirements.

8. EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure that external providers are made aware of the documentation they need to provide, or that must be sighted.

External providers must follow all mandated requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures and will be asked to supply copies of certain documentation, and/or make them available for the Department Teacher-in-charge to sight.

External providers should familiarise themselves with [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) and [Appendix D: External Provider Checklist](#).

9. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team members possess skills in cycling, navigation and bike maintenance, and have the appropriate experience, knowledge and skills to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during cycling activities.

Refer to [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) for mandated first aid and CPR accreditation requirements and supervisory team competencies.

Minimum qualifications, formal training accreditation or required knowledge and skills

Where cycling activities are conducted on school grounds or local trips on bike paths, shared paths and footpaths (crossing, but not travelling on roads), the Qualified Supervisor must have recent and relevant cycling experience, relevant current first aid and CPR accreditation.

If leaving the school grounds, at least one member of the supervisory team must have

recent and relevant experience specific to the desired activity or have attained current, activity-specific competencies from a recognised tertiary institution or training organisation, as follows:

Activity	Qualified Supervisor requirements
Low level riding competency (on and off school site, including Rottnest Island)	The Qualified Supervisor must have recent and relevant cycling experience, current knowledge of the location to be used, current first aid and CPR current accreditation.
Road or cycle touring	- The Qualified Supervisor must have recent and relevant cycling experience, current knowledge of the location to be used, and: <i>AustCycle Skills Coach Course</i> accreditation equivalent to the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS) <i>Beginning Coaching accreditation</i> or <i>Level 1 Road and Track Coach certificate</i> from Cycling Australia or <i>Foundation Instructor</i> from AusCycling: <i>Road or Teacher Accreditation Course: Cycling</i> from WestCycle. or - an equivalent qualification, as recognised by the Director General.
Velodrome, track or designated banked trail	- The Qualified Supervisor must be suitably qualified and must have proven recent and relevant experience in track/velodrome cycling and experience as an instructor; or - NCAS <i>Road or Track Skills Coach accreditation</i>; or <i>Foundation Instructor</i> from AusCycling: <i>Track</i>; or - an equivalent qualification, as recognised by the Director General.
BMX cycling	- The Qualified Supervisor must be able to prove they are suitably qualified and have proven recent and relevant experience in Conducting BMX cycling or <i>Freestyle BMX Coach accreditation</i> from Cycling Australia or <i>Beginner BMX Coach accreditation</i> from BMX Australia or <i>Foundation Instructor</i> from AusCycling: <i>BMX</i>; or - an equivalent qualification, as recognised by the Director General.
Mountain biking /off-road <i>Qualification only required for riding classifications of Moderate level riding competency and above.</i>	- The Qualified Supervisor must have recent <i>and</i> relevant mountain biking experience, current knowledge of the location to be used, current first aid with current CPR accreditations, personal experience in group mountain biking; and a current: <i>Level 0 MTB Skills Coach accreditation</i> from Mountain Bike Australia or <i>Foundation Instructor</i> from AusCycling: <i>Mountain Biking</i> or <i>Munda Biddi Ride Guide course</i> or - Relevant units in Mountain Biking completed as a part of a Certificate III (or higher) in Outdoor Recreation, Outdoor Leadership or Sport, Fitness and Recreation Training package or <i>Teacher Accreditation Course: Cycling from WestCycle</i> or - an equivalent qualification, as recognised by the Director General.

It is recommended that all members of the supervisory team have recent and relevant cycling skills, personal experience in the particular cycling activity and current knowledge of the location to be used.

It is recommended that at least two members of the supervisory team have relevant current first aid and CPR accreditation when conducting cycling activities off school sites.

Skills and experience

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team:

- has experience in the activity at the level being offered to students
- has the relevant qualifications
- has current First Aid and CPR qualifications
- understands the emergency responses and supervision responsibilities.

At least one member of the supervisory team must have expertise in routine bicycle maintenance.

All supervisors should have personal competence in the required cycling skills to be undertaken, as well as knowledge of:

- common injuries associated with each mode of cycling, and first aid experience in dealing with those injuries
- road rules and cycling codes, including rider etiquette.

Guidance

It is recommended that supervisors maintain evidence of their currency and experience through the use of a logbook, or similar.

10. MINIMUM LEVELS OF SUPERVISION

Group sizes and supervision levels are determined by the Department Teacher-in-charge after considering the:

- purpose of the activity
- age, capability, experience and skills of each student
- capacity of the teacher or supervisor(s)
- type of cycling activity to be undertaken
- students' medical conditions or disabilities
- nature of the environment.

Greater supervision may be required for less able students.

Supervision levels include the following minimum requirements:

- where cycling activities are held off school grounds, there must be at least two supervisors
- the Qualified Supervisor who leads the activity must have one of the required qualifications and recent and relevant experience.

Different levels of supervision apply to different cycling activities.

LOW LEVEL RIDING COMPETENCY - ON SCHOOL SITE

Kindergarten - Year 3

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- One Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students of part thereof; and
- One supervisor for every six students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- One Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students of part thereof; and
- One supervisor for every 11 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

Recommended two supervisors at all times:

- One Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students of part thereof; and
- One supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

LOW LEVEL RIDING COMPETENCY - OFF SCHOOL SITE (Includes Rottnest Island)

Kindergarten - Year 3

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- One Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students of part thereof; and
- One supervisor for every five students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- One Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students of part thereof; and
- One supervisor for every 11 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

There must be 2 supervisors at all times:

- One Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students of part thereof; and
- One supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

MODERATE LEVEL RIDING COMPETENCY

Kindergarten - Year 3

This activity is not recommended for students in Kindergarten - Year 3.

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- One Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students of part thereof; and
- One supervisor for every 10 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- One Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students of part thereof; and
- One supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

HIGH LEVEL RIDING COMPETENCY

Kindergarten - Year 6

- This activity is not permitted for students in Kindergarten - Year 6.

Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- One Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students of part thereof; and
- One supervisor for every 11 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

The following table illustrates the minimum supervision requirements for common group sizes. Groups may be larger than those indicated but must remain within the prescribed supervision ratios and any limits set out earlier in this document.

<i>Cycling activities</i>	<i>Year level</i>	<i>Number of students</i>	<i>Qualified Supervisor</i>	<i>Assistant Supervisor</i>	<i>Total supervisory team</i>
Low level riding competency: On site	K - 3	1 - 12	1	1	2
		13 - 18	1	2	3
		19 - 22	1	3	4
		23 - 24	2	2	4
		25 - 30	2	3	5
	4 - 6	1 - 22	1	1	2
		23 - 33	2	1	3
	7 - 12	1 - 16	1	0	1
		17 - 22	1	1	2
		23 - 32	2	0	2
Low level riding competency: Off site (inc Rottneest Island)	K - 3	1 - 10	1	1	2
		11 - 15	1	2	3
		16 - 20	1	3	4
		21 - 22	1	4	5
		23 - 25	2	3	5
		26 - 30	2	4	6
		31 - 35	2	5	7
	4 - 6	1 - 22	1	1	2
		23 - 33	2	1	3
	7 - 12	1 - 22	1	1	2
		23 - 32	2	0	2
Moderate level riding competency	K - 3	Not recommended			
	4 - 6	1 - 20	1	1	2
		21 - 22	1	2	3
		23 - 30	2	1	3
	7 - 12	1 - 16	1	1	2
		17 - 22	1	1	2
		23 - 32	2	0	2
High level riding competency	K - 6	Not permitted			
	7-12	1 - 11	1	1	2
		12 - 22	1	1	2
		23 - 33	2	1	3

11. SUPERVISION STRATEGIES

Supervisory requirements must take into consideration the:

- age, capacity, experience and skills of each student
- qualifications, capacity and experience of the supervisor(s)
- type of cycling activity to be undertaken
- students' medical conditions, disabilities or impairments
- nature of the environment (for example, roadway, velodrome, off-road, gravel, visibility, gradient, traffic hazards)
- location of the activity (local or remote) and
- current and predicted weather conditions.

When repairs are being made during a ride, the remainder of the group must be supervised in a safe environment.

Refer to Appendix G: Camping activity specific document if the cycling excursion has an overnight component.

Guidance

It is recommended that:

- *rules are established to confirm that all students remain in close proximity to the supervisors while in transit, particularly in poor weather conditions*
- *a supervisor with a current first aid qualification and competency in bicycle maintenance rides at the rear of the group or travels in the support vehicle following the group*
- *a lead cyclist is designated to provide guidance and direct the group to scheduled stops along the planned route*
- *a buddy system is established so that students can monitor and check the safety and wellbeing of their partner*
- *a regular head count of all participants is conducted, particularly at road or track junctions and/or in difficult conditions*
- *supervisors arrange pre-determined stops en route (as relevant) so that students can be provided with feedback, route information, safety tips, etc.*

12. IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS

In bushland all settings, students must always be clearly visible.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must employ systems for identifying students that may include brightly coloured fluorescent and/or reflective vests or similar. Alternatively, bicycles could be clearly marked and easily identifiable (e.g. with a brightly coloured flag).

Each identification system may be used in combination with others.

Supervisors should also wear brightly coloured/reflective clothing that promotes visibility.

13. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

14. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix B: Risk Management Plan, for further requirements.

15. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix C: Emergency Management Plan for further requirements.

16. BRIEFING STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that all participants are briefed about:

- the educational purpose (learning intentions) and the cooperative nature of the activity
- components of the activity (including skills required)
- standards of behaviour, including roles and responsibilities
- hazard identification and safety requirements
- buddy practices and procedures that will be followed if members of the party are overdue, or become lost or separated from the group
- physical boundaries marked for the activity
- communication signals to gain attention and request assistance
- emergency and evacuation procedures
- minimal impact principles for that location (Leave No Trace principles).

In addition to the above, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team have been briefed about the following:

- the role and location of supervisors
- maintaining supervision ratios (including of those students not involved in the activity)
- modified/adjusted activity requirements for students with a disability or impairment
- the system for identifying students and supervisors
- student-specific medical requirements
- conditions associated with hypothermia, sunburn and dehydration
- communication strategies that will be used throughout the activity, including designated signals to gain the attention of the whole group, and to identify when emergency assistance is required
- location of first aid kit and emergency/rescue equipment
- appropriate clothing for the activity and weather conditions, including thermal and sun protection
- aspects of the environment and expected weather conditions
- the route to be followed including pre-determined stops and/or meeting points along the way (if applicable). Route briefings may be conducted at rest stops.

Special information sessions must be arranged for students or staff who were absent from preparatory briefings.

17. INFORMED CONSENT

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements or further requirements.



Department of
Education

APPENDIX J: EQUINE ACTIVITIES

EFFECTIVE: 21 JULY 2025

VERSION: 3.1

EQUINE ACTIVITIES

This document contains specific requirements related to equine activities (horse riding and handling) and must be read in conjunction with *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures*.

1. BACKGROUND

Equine activities include both horse riding and handling.

Horse riding activities can be conducted in an arena or enclosed area, as well as trail riding in an open, natural environment.

Trail riding is an organised recreational riding activity where participants ride as a group outside of an enclosed area or arena into a natural environment. The term is applied to long (multi day) as well as short (an hour or two) rides that can be experienced in metropolitan, coastal, rural and remote regions.

Horse handling activities include where a horse or pony is interacted with, but not necessarily ridden, for example equine assisted wellbeing programs.

DEFINITIONS

ARENA

An enclosed area specifically designed or prepared for riding tuition, training or performance based activities involving horses.

ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR

Assists the Qualified Supervisor and or Department Teacher-in-charge. Has recent and relevant experience in the activity at the level being offered to students.

DEPARTMENT TEACHER-IN-CHARGE

The member of the teaching staff, employed by the Department of Education (or an Approved Provider) and is managing the school activity (for information relating to Approved Providers refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements*).

EVENT

An organised series of activities held in the one place at the one time. Events have a defined start and end and may involve both participants and spectators.

LEAD RIDE

Participants are taken on a leisurely recreational ride using a lead rope between each horse and supervisor.

OPEN AREAS

Areas outside the enclosed arena. This may include fenced paddocks, bushland, bridle trails and roads.

QUALIFIED SUPERVISOR

Has the required qualifications, skill, experience and technical knowledge to instruct the activity. Also referred to in this document as 'Qualified Instructor'.

SUPERVISORY TEAM

A pair or group of people who have a supervisory role at the activity.

TRAIL RIDE

An organised recreational ride where students ride horses outside an enclosed area in a natural setting.

2. ENVIRONMENT

Prior to commencing the program, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team have a relevant recognised qualification and recent and relevant experience to deliver horse riding and and/or horse handling activities.

Arena or enclosed facilities must have safe fences, enclosed yards and/or gates.

Qualified Instructor/s must be familiar with the facilities and location in which the equine activity will take place and confirm students can access water, toilets and shelter when appropriate.

Qualified Instructors must have knowledge of the horses provided for use, especially for students new to equine activities. Qualified Instructors must confirm the horses provided are suitable for handling and/or riding activities.

Students **must not** be exposed to bushland, trails, roads or any locations that have not been assessed by a Qualified Instructor who is familiar with the horses, the environment, and the students' capacity, skills and experience.

Guidance

For further information about equestrian trails, see [Trails WA](#)

Trails must:

- have safe footing and clearance
- be located away from main highways
- be at an appropriate level of difficulty for student capacity
- have access to support vehicles at predetermined sections along the trail (if required).

Horse riding on roads

Beginner or inexperienced riders **must not** ride on roads or along the edges of busy public roads.

Experienced horse riders riding on roads must keep to the left and obey all traffic rules and regulations. They must be familiar with procedures for crossing roads and allowing vehicles to pass. Horses must be familiar with and/or deemed suitable for this environment.

Students must ride in single file or in pairs. When in pairs, a more experienced rider and/or horse must be placed on the traffic side.

Trail riding and riding in open spaces

All participants will follow the principles of Leave No Trace, abide by permit requirements, relevant laws and regulations, and recognise local community interests (for example use designated bridle trails).

Weather conditions need to be assessed and monitored in the days leading up to the activity, on the day of the activity and throughout the activity, to determine conditions and comply with fire ban regulations. The supervisory team may need to modify, relocate or cancel the

activity at any time. Check the Bureau of Meteorology for up to date conditions and weather warnings.

In any area where high alert weather conditions are forecast and/or areas where the fire danger rating is very high or above horseriding is not to be undertaken. Refer to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services or Emergency WA for fire alerts, prescribed burns or fire danger ratings or contact the local shire as part of an environmental check.

If conducting horse riding activities during the fire restriction season, the Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure a route is planned that allows for evacuation and confirm that the group has access to current fire information via radio, mobile or satellite phones.

3. CAPACITY OF STUDENTS

The Qualified Instructor must assess the:

- capacity of all students and determine whether they have the capacity to safely participate
- equine activity to be undertaken
- safety of horses proposed for the activity
- environment and equipment.

Ideally, students should have a lesson in an enclosed arena first and, if they are deemed competent, then participate in a trail ride with the correct supervision requirements in place. For beginners of any age group, the horses must be kept to a walk.

Students in Year 4 and below can only participate in trail riding, if their horse is on a lead.

Other equine activities such as handling, grooming or leading through obstacles, may be provided for students who do not have the capacity to participate in horse riding activities.

Where students with a disability, impairment or medical condition participate in horse riding activities, particular attention is given to the provision of:

- a mounting ramp/sling
- training for supervisors and assistants regarding how to lift and transfer a student's weight across the horse
- support on either side of the horse, as well as a supervisor to lead the horse
- an assistant to walk beside students where required (refer to the Riding for the Disabled Association of Australia - Volunteer Training, Side Walking Fact Sheet)
- frequent checks during trail rides to combat fatigue and a loss of concentration
- arena activities for students that tire easily (more appropriate than a trail ride)
- regular rest breaks.

Students with the condition known as 'atlantoaxial instability' (greater than average neck mobility) should not be permitted to undertake riding activities. This condition is common in students with Down Syndrome.

Students who have a medically diagnosed condition that may impact their safety must be cleared by a medical practitioner before they can participate.

Horses provided for beginner or inexperienced students must be experienced in the activities they are to undertake, respond to pressure on the reins to slow down and be approved as suitable. The horses must be calm and 'unflappable' and not show signs of nervousness, restlessness, being reactive or too responsive. Incidents can be caused by a new or inexperienced rider making sudden movements and noises which upset and frighten the

horse. Selected horses must not have vices such as kicking, rearing, bolting, shying or bucking/pigrooting.

The Qualified Instructor in consultation with the Department Teacher-in-charge confirms that each student has the additional skills required, before they participate in jumping activities, longer trekking, trail riding expeditions or dressage.

4. STUDENT HEALTH CARE

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

5. ACTIVITIES

The range of proposed activities must be assessed by the Qualified Instructor in consultation with the Department Teacher-in-charge, before final decisions are made about activities and areas to be used.

Prior to approaching, handling or riding horses, all students must be provided with a briefing or induction that includes safety rules which apply when interacting with horses.

Beginner riders must be assisted to mount their horses. This includes holding the horse while the rider mounts, checking the girth/cinch is firm before and after the mount, and ensuring stirrups are the correct width and length for the comfort and safety of the rider.

6. EQUIPMENT

The Qualified Instructor must assess all equipment to confirm it is appropriate to the activity, safe and in working order.

All participants in riding activities must wear a properly fitted riding helmet that adheres to the appropriate Australian Standard. Chinstraps should be fastened securely for all horse riding activities.

Equipment must be retired after a maximum of five years unless the manufacturer specifies a longer service life. Equipment **must not** be used if there is any doubt about its integrity. Emergency equipment appropriate for the activity, location and duration of the activity, must be readily accessible.

Appropriate first aid equipment must be readily accessible. The first aid kit must include items appropriate to the activity, environment, size and needs of the party, and duration of the activity.

For trail rides, supervisors should carry a lead rope and know how to use it to lead correctly from another horse.

Straight sided stirrups or devices such as *Smarrider Breakaway* are recommended, as they are specifically designed to prevent individuals being dragged by the stirrup in the event of a fall. Safety stirrups (with a bend on one side) are not recommended.

Shoes must fit freely in and out of stirrups. Stirrup irons should not exceed the width of the shoe at the ball of the foot by more than 1cm. Track shoes or joggers **must not** be worn unless *Smarrider Breakaway* stirrups are used.

The Qualified Instructor must be satisfied with the maintenance of all relevant equipment prior to the commencement of the activity. External providers are responsible for recording the safety and maintenance of their equipment.

For further information, refer to Australian Adventure Activity Good Practice Guide: Horse Trail Riding.

The bridle should be the correct size and fit the horse. The saddle should be of a comfortable size and fit for the horse and rider (beginner riders may benefit from the use and security of a Stock saddle or a Western or Hybrid saddle).

Beginners should be put in a saddle which supports them with knee and thigh rolls.

The girth/cinch should be re-checked for tightness after the horse has moved around and warmed up and should be sufficiently tight as to allow mounting without excess saddle movement. A neck strap is useful for beginner riders when they are learning to trot.

All participants should wear: long, tightly fitted trousers that do not restrict movement or chafe; a shirt with a collar and long sleeves; leather or synthetic riding boots with a smooth sole and solid heel; or smooth-soled shoes with a closed toe and a distinct heel, to stop the foot slipping through the stirrup.

7. THE SUPERVISORY TEAM

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

8. EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure that external providers are made aware of the documentation they need to provide, or that must be sighted.

External providers must follow all mandated requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures and will be asked to supply copies of certain documentation, and/or make them available for the Department Teacher-in-charge to sight. External providers should familiarise themselves with Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix D: External Provider Checklist.

9. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team members possess skills in equine activities, and have the appropriate recent and relevant experience, knowledge and skills to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during activities.

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for mandated first aid and CPR accreditation requirements and supervisory team competencies. The Qualified Supervisor must hold a current activity specific qualification and maintain proof of experience (per annum).

Where sub-groups are formed, each sub-group must have a Qualified Instructor.

Where an external provider is used, the Department Teacher-in-charge must be satisfied that the provider is a qualified and competent instructor.

Minimum qualifications that the Qualified Supervisor must have, include, but are not limited to:	<u>AND</u> proof of experience:
• Australian Horse Riding Centres (AHRC) <i>Level 1</i> qualification (recreation and/or trail riding) or • Equestrian Australia Introductory Coach qualification (or higher) or • Pony Club Australia Preliminary Coach qualification (or higher) or • Horse Safety Australia <i>Instructor, Senior Instructor or Trail Guide</i> qualification or • Certificates (with equestrian units) or skill sets from the SIS Sport, Fitness and Recreation Training Package: - Instruct Horse Handling Skills - Instruct Fundamental Horse Riding Skills - Instruct the advancement of Recreational Horse Riding Skills	• Maintain proof of logged experience per annum.

- Tracked Horse Trail Ride Guiding or • Riding for the Disabled Association <i>Level 1 or 2 coaching</i> qualification for students with disabilities or • an equivalent qualification, as recognised by the Director General.	
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Skills and experience

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team:

- has recent and relevant logged experience in the activity at the level being offered to students
- has at least one member with a current First aid and CPR qualification
- understands the emergency responses and supervision responsibilities.

Teachers or supervisors who are not Qualified Instructors from the site **must not** be placed in an instructional role for horse riding (regardless of their personal riding experience), as they are likely to be unfamiliar with the behaviours of the individual horses being used, the specific requirements of the activity being undertaken, and the emergency systems of the site.

Guidance

Further information about qualifications in the different horse-riding disciplines can be found on the following websites:

- [Horse Safe Australia](#)
- [Equestrian Australia](#) and
- [Equestrian Western Australia](#).

It is recommended that supervisors maintain evidence of their currency and experience through the use of a logbook, or similar.

10. MINIMUM LEVELS OF SUPERVISION

Group sizes and supervision levels are determined after considering the:

- purpose and type of activities to be undertaken
- age, capacity, experience and skills of each student
- qualifications, capacity and experience of the supervisor(s)
- students' medical conditions, disabilities or impairment
- nature of the environment.

The minimum level of supervision is:

- one Qualified Instructor, for arena or enclosed riding areas or
- where there are two supervisors, the first should be the Qualified Instructor and the Assistant Supervisor can be an experienced rider, trained in the procedures of the site, is familiar with the route to be taken, has first aid qualifications and assists the Qualified Instructor.

Students not directly involved in equine activities are supervised separately.

Kindergarten to Year 4 students can only participate in a trail ride, if their horse is on a lead.

Lead activities

Kindergarten - Year 4

Must have two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Instructor for every 8 students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every four students or part thereof (including the Qualified Instructor).

Enclosed arena riding, handling and lead activities

Year 5 - 6

Recommended two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Instructor for every 8 students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every 8 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Instructor).

Trail riding/open spaces

Year 5 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Instructor for every 10 students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every 5 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Instructor).

Enclosed arena riding, handling area and lead activities

Year 7 - 12

Recommended two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Instructor for every 8 students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every 8 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Instructor).

Trail riding/open spaces

Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Instructor for every 12 students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every 6 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Instructor).

The following table illustrates the minimum supervision requirements for each group size. Larger group sizes are not recommended for horse riding activities.

<i>Year level</i>	<i>Activities</i>	<i>Number of students</i>	<i>Qualified Supervisor /Instructor</i>	<i>Assistant supervisor</i>	<i>Total supervisory team</i>
K - 4	Lead activities	1 - 8	1	1	2
		9 - 12	2	1	3
		13 - 16	2	2	4
	Trail rides/open areas	Not permitted			
5 - 6	Arena (enclosed riding/handling area)	1 - 8	1	0	1
		9 - 16	2	0	2
	Larger group sizes are not recommended in enclosed arenas				
	Trail rides/open areas	1 - 10	1	1	2
		11- 15	2	1	3
		16 - 20	2	2	4
7 - 12	Arena (enclosed riding/handling area)	1 - 8	1	0	1
		9 - 16	2	0	2
	Larger group sizes are not recommended in enclosed arenas				
	Trail rides/open areas	1 - 12	1	1	2
		13 - 18	2	1	3
		19 - 24	2	2	4

Guidance**Arena riding**

Where more than eight students are participating in an arena or enclosed area, two groups of students may be formed. If this occurs there should be two Qualified Supervisors (one for each group of eight or part thereof) as listed in the table above and each must supervise their own group of students.

11. SUPERVISION STRATEGIES

Supervision strategies must be confirmed by the Department Teacher-in-charge to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of students is maintained at all times.

Supervision strategies must address all circumstances where students are not in clear view of the supervisors. Students not directly involved in the equine activities must be supervised separately.

Trail rides

Participants with asthma or dust sensitivity should travel at the front of the group if the terrain is dusty.

A Qualified Instructor is situated at the front (*the head*) and also at the rear (*the tail or drag*) of each trail ride group. The most experienced Qualified Instructor should ride at the rear of the group.

Beginner and/or inexperienced riders must remain in clear view of the supervisors and kept under close supervision.

Inexperienced or beginner riders, ride single file.

Supervisors remain in close proximity to students at all times.

Students and horses are continually monitored for fatigue/exhaustion.

Pre-determined stops are arranged en route so regular head counts can be conducted, equipment checks can take place and students can be provided with feedback.

Trail rides should align with the ability of the least skillful rider in the group.

For larger rides which have three or more Qualified Instructors, the extra instructors should ride at various points along the group, watch the students, and give instruction as required.

Rides in excess of twelve (12) horses (in total) are not recommended in a single group.

12. IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Students and supervisors must be easily identifiable.

A system of identification is determined by the Department Teacher-in-charge and may include:

- the wearing of coloured helmets, armbands or school shirts
- confining students to designated areas not being utilised by other schools or members of the public.

Refer to [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) for further requirements.

13. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Refer to [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) for further requirements.

14. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix B: Risk Management Plan for further requirements.

Guidance

Further information relating to risk management for horse handling and/or riding, can be found in the Safe Work Australia Guide to managing risks when new and inexperienced persons interact with horses

15. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix C: Emergency Management Plan for further requirements.

Specific reference to the handling of loose, injured or misbehaving horses must be included in the emergency response plan.

16. BRIEFING STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

The Department Teacher in Charge must confirm that all participants are briefed about:

- the educational purpose (learning intentions) and the cooperative nature of the activity
- components of the activity (including skills required – see Guidance)
- standards of behaviour, including roles and responsibilities
- hazard identification and safety requirements
- buddy practices (and lost buddy procedures when applicable)
- physical boundaries marked for the activity
- communication signals to gain attention and request assistance
- emergency and evacuation procedures
- the route to be followed (where applicable) including pre-determined stops and/or meeting points along the way
- minimal impact principles for that location (see Leave No Trace principles).

Students must not approach or mount a horse until they have participated in a briefing session.

In addition to the above, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team have been briefed about the following:

- the role and location of supervisors
- maintaining supervision ratios (including of those students not involved in the activity)
- modified/adjusted activity requirements for students with a disability or impairment
- the system for identifying students and supervisors
- student-specific medical requirements
- conditions associated with hypothermia, sunburn and dehydration
- communication strategies that will be used throughout the activity, including designated signals to gain the attention of the whole group, and to identify when emergency assistance is required
- location of first aid kit and emergency/rescue equipment
- appropriate clothing for the activity and weather conditions, including thermal and sun protection
- aspects of the environment and expected weather conditions.

Special information sessions must be arranged for students or staff who were absent from preparatory briefings.

Guidance

Briefings may include (but are not limited to):

- *ways to approach a horse and the importance of avoiding its 'blind-spots' and hind quarters; maintaining a safe distance from the horse and rider in front*
- *stopping, starting and turning a horse*
- *appropriate behaviour around horses, remaining aware, alert, calm and quiet*
- *moving slowly when standing and holding a horse and not moving suddenly*
- *not getting too close to a horse and getting stepped upon*
- *the importance of not mounting a horse without assistance*
- *respect and care for the horses*
- *minimal impact practices when on a trail ride (e.g. remaining on the track).*

17. INFORMED CONSENT

Refer to [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) for further requirements.



Department of
Education

APPENDIX K: ORIENTEERING, ROGAINING AND NAVIGATION

EFFECTIVE: 21 JULY 2025

VERSION: 3.1

ORIENTEERING, ROGAINING AND NAVIGATION

This document contains specific requirements related to orienteering, rogaining and navigation activities, and must be read in conjunction with the *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures*.

1. BACKGROUND

Orienteering, rogaining and navigation activities focus on the use and interpretation of maps in outdoor environments, with or without the aid of a compass for navigation. These activities are generally suitable for a wide range of age groups. Beginners may be introduced to these skills using a simple map to locate points around a school environment. As a student's skill set progresses, they may be challenged by completing more difficult courses in natural and urban environments.

If orienteering, rogaining and/or navigation activities are planned during a school camp, then the mandated requirements in *Appendix G: Camping* activity-specific document will also apply.

DEFINITIONS

ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR

Assists the Qualified Supervisor and or Department Teacher-in-charge. Has recent and relevant experience in the activity at the level being offered to students

DEPARTMENT TEACHER-IN-CHARGE

The member of the teaching staff, employed by the Department of Education (or an Approved Provider) and is to manage the school activity (for information relating to Approved Providers refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements*).

NAVIGATION ACTIVITIES

An activity where participants find their way around a predetermined course using a large scale orienteering map in natural environments with or without a compass.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Area of low density human population and infrastructure. Includes parkland, bushland and forests, wilderness and coastal areas (such as beaches and dunes).

ORIENTEERING

A competitive sport where participants navigate their way around a predetermined course using a large scale orienteering map with or without the use of a compass, at speed.

QUALIFIED SUPERVISOR

Has the required qualifications, skill, experience and technical knowledge to instruct the activity.

REMOTE OR ISOLATED AREAS

Includes any location where medical emergency assistance is more than one hour away by road and/or air.

ROGAINING

The sport of long distance cross-country navigation in which teams of two to five members visit as many checkpoints as possible in 24 hours.

URBAN ENVIRONMENT

Human settlement area with high density population and the infrastructure of a built environment.

2. ENVIRONMENT

The suitability of an activity location is determined after considering the:

- skills, experience and capacity of each student
- location risks such as river crossings, exposed areas, slippery rocks, cliff and rock faces
- level of access to paths, roads and communication.

Many walking trails have been graded according to the Australian Walking Track Grading System, a voluntary industry standard:

Grade of walk	Gradient	Quality of path	Distance	Experience required
1	Flat	Well-formed track. Universal accessibility.	< 5km	None
2	Gentle hills	Formed track	< 10km	None
3	Short steep hills	Formed track, some obstacles	< 20km	Some. Moderate level of fitness.
4	Very steep sections	Rough track, many obstacles	N/A	Experienced
5	Very steep and difficult	Rough, unformed track	N/A	Very experienced with specialist skills including navigation and emergency first aid.

School groups using national parks should consult the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) Emergency WA regarding fire bans, smoke, park closure alerts and updates that may affect their proposed activity.

Many sites have access restrictions. Written permission must be gained from the relevant authority (DBCA regional office, local land management body, lease holders or private property owner). These organisations/owners can also be consulted for information about:

- route planning (including evacuation)
- alternative routes in the event of restricted access
- shelter, toilets, drinking water availability along the planned route
- procedures to follow when there is a risk of bad weather, storms, bushfires and/or other changes to the environment.

Orienteering courses must have clearly recognisable and pre-determined boundaries.

Weather considerations

Weather conditions must be assessed and monitored:

- in the days leading up to the activity
- on the day of the activity
- throughout the activity.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must continue to assess conditions and comply with fire ban regulations. The supervisory team may need to modify, relocate or cancel the activity at any time. Check the Bureau of Meteorology for up to date conditions and weather warnings.

Orienteering, rogaining and navigation activities are not to be undertaken in any area where high alert weather conditions are forecast and/or any area where the fire danger rating is extreme or above. Refer to the Department of Fire and Emergency Services and/or

EmergencyWA for fire alerts or fire danger ratings or contact the local shire as part of an environmental check.

If orienteering, rogaining, cross-country navigating or camping during the fire restriction season, plan a route that allows for evacuation and confirm that the group has access to current fire information via radio, mobile or satellite phones providing bulletins from a manned base.

Leave No Trace practices are observed at all times, particularly in environmentally sensitive areas as some walking areas cannot sustain frequent usage by groups (dunes, caves).

If planning activities in a national park, permissions from the relevant Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions office is required (groups are to complete the Lawful authority form to conduct non-commercial activities on CALM Act land and submit it for approval).

Groups using the Bibbulmun Track, and the Cape to Cape Track will need to complete a notification of intent. See the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA) for trail updates, maps and conditions.

Guidance

Other sources of information may include:

- *the venue manager*
- *Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions*
- *the Western Australian Police*
- *the local ranger, lease holder, private property owner or land manager*
- *experienced bushwalkers and rogainers*
- *orienteering or rogaining clubs or associations*
- *other schools that have conducted similar activities at that location*
- *Outdoors WA and other external providers.*

Possession of a map does not confer the right of entry to private property on some public reserves. Prior permission to use an area should always be obtained.

A member of the supervisory team should survey the area to update the map, where necessary.

The most suitable natural areas for orienteering have open forest, a network of tracks and clear boundaries. A fire danger rating of Extreme or above may trigger the closure of DBCA trails and facilities.

3. CAPACITY OF STUDENTS

Prior to commencing the program, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that each student has the capacity to participate safely.

If orienteering, rogaining and/or navigation activities are combined with other recreation and/or outdoor education activities, relevant mandated activity-specific requirements will also apply.

Alternative, modified or adjusted activities should be provided for students who have limited capacity to participate.

Students with a disability or impairment may participate in desired activities provided adequate safety and control measures are implemented. Specific consideration is given to:

- the type and level of disability or impairment
- location and access
- adjustments so that the student can access the curriculum activity on the same basis as their peers.

Students who have a medically diagnosed condition that may impact their safety, must be cleared by a medical practitioner before they can participate.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must be aware of health care maintenance and/or any intensive health care needs of students, particularly allergic reactions to stings or bites. Protective clothing should be considered for students who are susceptible.

A re-assessment of students' capacity is undertaken if any circumstances surrounding the activity change. This includes any change in the condition of the environment, their medical fitness, or their capacity to undertake the activity.

4. STUDENT HEALTH CARE

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further guidance.

5. ACTIVITIES

Introductory activities should take place on school grounds or open areas before commencing courses in natural environments.

The full range of proposed activities (particularly when combining with other recreation and outdoor education activities) is assessed to determine whether students have the required skills to safely participate.

Route planning takes into account the availability of shelter, adequate and safe water supplies, and an escape route.

The area to be used for the activity is included in a map of the site, with distinct contour features marked.

In the initial stages of learning, or when in remote natural settings, supervisors should rove the site and be positioned near control points and/or the extremities of the course.

A finishing time is set. All students must return to the pre-determined assembly area at the designated time, irrespective of whether or not they have completed the activity.

River crossings can be extremely hazardous. Groups **must not** attempt a river crossing if the location or other elements are considered to be dangerous (for example, during periods of flooding; where the depth, speed, bottom load or ability of the group is unknown; or in an estuarine crocodile habitat). Where possible, courses should avoid river crossings that require students to enter the water.

Guidance

Students should initially be trained in map reading in an open area that is familiar to them.

Navigation activities in natural settings should only be undertaken by students who are confident navigators and have a good understanding of contour interpretation.

Out of bounds areas should be marked on the maps for the activity.

Inexperienced students should be accompanied by a supervisor.

River crossings

River and creek crossings require careful planning and assessment of a number of factors on the day. The decision to cross, and the way in which the crossing might be made, is determined after considering:

- *access points*
- *the nature of the river bottom*
- *the depth and current*
- *the energy, capacity and swimming ability of group members*

- *weather*
- *obstructions/obstacles*
- *the time of day.*

Rivers can be crossed using a bridge, various craft, rafts and/or Tyrolean Traverses (using a fixed line to cross from one point to another). Tyrolean Traverses should only be attempted if a supervisor is a Qualified Supervisor with the required knowledge and experience in this activity.

Strategies should be considered when assisting students as they cross a river or creek and include:

- *a line astern (single file), wedge formation, circle of support, or one person with support (for example, a stick or paddle)*
- *the use of stronger participants to carry backpacks and other equipment*
- *the placement of stronger participants at strategic points across the river*
- *the placement of upstream spotters for hazards floating downstream*
- *downstream back-ups with a rope to aid distressed students*
- *buddying less able students with those who are more capable (in groups of two or three)*
- *establishing a safety rope*
- *finding another crossing.*

6. EQUIPMENT

All equipment must be checked to confirm that it is appropriate for the activity, safe and in working order.

Prior to the commencement of the activity, the Department Teacher-in-charge confirms that participants have easy access to:

- highly visible clothing that is appropriate for natural settings and potential weather conditions, with a particular emphasis on protection from sun, wind, rain, cold and heat conditions. Consideration should be given to woollen or thermal synthetic garments that provide more warmth, and long trousers in an off-trail setting
- a broad rimmed or Legionnaire style hat
- a backpack (if necessary) that ideally, does not exceed one quarter of the body weight of students, and one third of the body weight of adults
- a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen, applied as per manufacturer's instructions;
- insect repellent
- safe, sturdy footwear that is appropriate for the duration of the activity (for example, walking shoes, joggers or sandshoes)
- sufficient drinking water for the duration of the activity (and/or supplied at control points if possible)
- a watch or alternative time telling device
- a waterproof map of the planned route or GPS coordinates
- an emergency whistle and/or head-torch, as relevant.

Supervisors require:

- a waterproof copy of the route plan, map and compass
- a copy of the risk management and emergency response plans
- emergency communication equipment as appropriate to the location, such as a mobile or satellite phone, radio, Emergency Position-Indicator Radio Beacon (EPIRB) or Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) and details of the nearest landline numbers
- readily accessible emergency equipment (whistle, torch, fire-lighting equipment)
- readily accessible first aid equipment. The first aid kit must include items appropriate to the type of training, location, duration, size and needs of the group. For larger groups, two kits may be required
- knowledge of where shelter, toilets, drinking water etc. might be found at the location
- tools for proper waste disposal (for example, a trowel).

Mobile phones must be available for use in an emergency situation (with allowance made for the fact that they do not operate in all localities). Where there is no mobile phone coverage, UHF radios should be used. A satellite phone is an alternative option.

Guidance

If carrying backpacks, equipment may need to be shared amongst the group to manage weight limits. As part of the briefing for an extended or overnight course, students should be instructed how to organise belongings in their back pack so that their centre of gravity and comfort is not affected.

7. THE SUPERVISORY TEAM

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further guidance.

8. EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure that external providers are made aware of the documentation they need to provide, or that must be sighted.

External providers must follow all mandated requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures and will be asked to supply copies of certain documentation, and/or make them available for the Department Teacher-in-charge to sight. External providers should familiarise themselves with Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix D: External Provider Checklist.

9. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm the supervisory team members possess skills in navigation, and have the appropriate recent and relevant experience, knowledge and skills to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during orienteering, rogaining and navigation activities.

Guidance

It is recommended that supervisors maintain evidence of their recent and relevant experience through the use of a logbook, or similar.

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for mandated:

- first aid qualifications; and
- evidence requirements of qualifications competencies and recent and relevant experience.

Minimum qualifications and/or formal training accreditations:

A Qualified Supervisor must hold a relevant current first aid certificate including current cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) accreditation. In the case where the group is in an isolated or remote area, a member of the supervisory team must have the appropriate first aid qualifications for remote areas. Remote or isolated areas include any location where medical emergency assistance might be more than one hour away, by road, air or water. Refer to the Appendix S: Swimming and Water Based Activities activity specific document for mandated qualifications and supervision requirements that apply if students will be going into water, or if water is likely to be an inherent risk.

Refer to the Appendix G: Camping activity specific document for mandated qualifications and supervision requirements that apply if students will be camping overnight.

Guidance

It is recommended that supervisors taking students into natural environments hold a:

- Orientation Instructor qualification (available through Orienteering Western Australia) or
- relevant units in Orienteering and/or cross country navigation completed as a part of a Certificate III (or higher) in Outdoor Recreation or Outdoor Leadership.

Skills and experience

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team:

- has experience in the activity at the level being offered to students
- has at least one member with current first aid
- has at least one member with a current CPR qualification
- understands the emergency responses and supervision responsibilities.

10. MINIMUM LEVELS OF SUPERVISION

Supervisory requirements must take into consideration the:

- Purpose and type of activities to be undertaken
- age, capacity, experience and skills of each student
- qualifications, capacity and experience of the supervisor/s
- students' medical conditions or disability/impairment
- location and nature of the environment (for example, local or remote, school, parkland, unfamiliar bushland) and
- weather conditions.

Greater supervision may be required for less able students.

Students not directly involved in activities must be supervised.

Inexperienced students should work in pairs or small groups of greater ability.

The Department Teacher-in-charge determines group size after considering route characteristics, land manager restrictions and environmental considerations.

NAVIGATION ACTIVITIES: URBAN ENVIRONMENTS

Kindergarten - Year 3

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students of part thereof and
- one supervisor for every six students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students of part thereof and
- one supervisor for every 11 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

It is recommended that there are two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students of part thereof.

NAVIGATION ACTIVITIES: BUSHLAND ENVIRONMENTS

Kindergarten - Year 3

This activity is not recommended for students in Kindergarten to Year 3.

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students of part thereof and
- one supervisor for every six students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students of part thereof and
- one supervisor for every 11 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

The following table provides the minimum supervision requirements for common group sizes. Groups may be larger than those indicated here but must remain within the prescribed supervision ratios and any limits set out earlier in this document.

Activity	Year level	Number of students	Qualified Supervisor	Assistant Supervisor	Total supervisory team
Orienteering, rogaining and navigation activities: In urban environments	K - 3	1 - 12	1	1	2
		13 - 18	1	2	3
		19 - 22	1	3	4
		23 - 24	2	2	4
		25 - 30	2	3	5
	4 - 6	1 - 22	1	1	2
		23 - 33	2	1	3
	7 - 12	1 - 22	1	0	1
		23 - 44	2	0	2
Orienteering, rogaining and navigation activities: In natural environments	K - 3	Not recommended			
	4 - 6	1 - 12	1	1	2
		13 - 18	1	2	3
		19 - 22	1	3	4
		23 - 24	2	2	4
		25 - 30	2	3	5
	7 - 12	1 - 22	1	1	2
		23 - 33	2	1	3

If land managers or government agencies stipulate maximum numbers of participants, schools must adhere to these requirements.

Guidance

It is recommended that for all activities:

- a buddy system be established so students can monitor and check the safety and wellbeing of a partner
- lost buddy procedures are outlined to all participants.

Overnight stays

Refer to the [Appendix G: Camping](#) activity specific document and for further guidance on overnight stays.

11. SUPERVISION STRATEGIES

The Department Teacher-in-charge must establish supervision strategies to confirm that the safety and wellbeing of students are maintained at all times.

The Department Teacher-in-charge is to determine the roles of supervisors, the number of supervisors and the method of supervision.

Supervisory strategies for orienteering, rogaining and navigation activities must be considered in accordance with the:

- age, experience and ability of the students
- student medical conditions, disabilities or impairment
- type or purpose of the activity to be undertaken
- nature of the environment and weather
- location of the activity.

Supervision strategies must address the circumstance where students are not in clear view of the supervisors.

Guidelines

At competitions such as the WA Schools Orienteering Championships, teachers are normally not allowed on the course. Orienteering WA uses volunteers from its membership to patrol the courses and monitor students.

12. IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS

In all settings, students should always be clearly visible.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must employ systems for identifying students that may include the wearing of school shirts, uniforms, school or other hats, vests, sashes, armbands, name tags and/or stickers.

Each identification system may be used in combination with others.

Supervisors should carry brightly coloured equipment and/or wear coloured clothing that promotes visibility.

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further guidance about the identification of students.

13. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further guidance.

14. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix B: Risk Management Plan for further guidance.

15. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix C: Emergency Management Plan, for further guidance.

16. BRIEFING STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that all participants are briefed about:

- the educational purpose (learning intentions) and the cooperative nature of the activity
- components of the activity (including skills required)
- standards of behaviour, including roles and responsibilities
- hazard identification and safety requirements
- buddy practices and procedures that will be followed if members of the party are overdue, or become lost or separated from the group (refer to Appendix F: Bushwalking - Appendix 1)
- physical boundaries marked for the activity
- communication signals to gain attention and request assistance
- emergency and evacuation procedures
- minimal impact principles for that location (Leave No Trace principles).

In addition to the above, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team have been briefed about the following:

- the role and location of supervisors
- maintaining supervision ratios (including of those students not involved in the activity)
- modified/adjusted activity requirements for students with a disability or impairment
- the system for identifying students and supervisors
- student-specific medical requirements
- conditions associated with hypothermia, sunburn and dehydration

- communication strategies that will be used throughout the activity, including designated signals to gain the attention of the whole group, and to identify when emergency assistance is required
- location of first aid kit and emergency/rescue equipment
- appropriate clothing for the activity and weather conditions, including thermal and sun protection
- aspects of the environment and expected weather conditions.

Special information sessions must be arranged for students or staff who were absent from preparatory briefings.

17. INFORMED CONSENT

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements* for further guidance.



Department of
Education

APPENDIX L: PADDLING

EFFECTIVE: 21 JULY 2025

VERSION: 3.1

PADDLING

This document contains specific requirements related to paddling activities and must be read in conjunction with *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures*.

1. BACKGROUND

Schools conduct a range of paddling activities in a variety of contexts. The activities include single day excursions, basic level skill development in swimming pools or on calm water, through to advanced paddling skills on open waters, and/or on white water up to Grade 3. Skill development programs often culminate with extended expeditions.

This activity-specific document provides mandated requirements for rafting, canoeing, kayaking and a range of other paddle craft (including inflatable craft).

Any person propelling a recreational canoe, kayak, surf ski, stand-up paddle board (SUP), inflatable or similar craft by paddle must comply with Department of Transport marine laws.

DEFINITIONS

ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR

Assists the Qualified Supervisor and or Department Teacher-in-charge. Must have recent and relevant experience in the activity, at the level being offered to the students.

CALM WATER

A still or slow-moving water environment with no to low swell, within **400 meters** of a safe landing point. These areas may include a sheltered or protected coastal area or river, dam, waterhole or inland water body.

DEPARTMENT TEACHER-IN-CHARGE

A member of the teaching staff employed by the Department of Education (or an Approved Provider) and managing the school activity. For information relating to Approved Providers refer to Appendix A: General Requirements.

FIXED LOCATION

Within **200 metres** of the initial launching point.

GROUP ONE PADDLE CRAFT

Watercraft that are not intended for use with spray decks, do not conceal any part of a person's body and do not pose a potential hazard for entrapment allowing for the immediate exit of a person in the event of a capsize.

This includes but is not limited to: Stand-Up Paddle Board; Single and Double Sit-on-Top Kayaks; Open Canoe; Inflatable Rafts; Single or double skis: Ocean Racing, Molokai, Spec, Long Plastic and Short Plastic.

GROUP TWO PADDLE CRAFT

All watercraft that conceals any part of a person's body, can be used with a spray deck and/or have the potential to cause body entrapment in the event of a capsize.

This includes but is not limited to: single, double, triple, four-persons, and Multi-Sport Kayaks; Wild-Water, Guppy, Short Recreational, Slalom, Polo Bat, Play-boat, Freestyle, Creeker, and General White-Water Kayaks; Sea, Estuary, Short Plastic, Long Plastic and Touring Kayaks; Wild-Water, Slalom, C1, and C2 Canoes.

LEAD SUPERVISOR

The member of the supervisory team in the lead position when on an expedition.

LOW SWELL

Shore breaking waves that are on average less than 0.5 meters and have a times wave gap of greater than 8 seconds.

NON-FIXED LOCATION

Any area beyond **200 metres** from the initial launching point.

OPEN WATER

An unprotected water environment that may be fast flowing or turbulent, such as a surf beach, flowing river or waterway, tidal coastal water, or areas affected by swell and or/strong currents. This also applies to calm water areas greater than **400 meters** from a safe landing point.

PADDLING

The propulsion and steering of water-based craft, by a person or persons, using a paddle with either single or double ended blade.

PROTECTED WATERS

Includes rivers, lakes, estuaries, harbours and waters within 400 meters from the shore in unprotected waters but excludes the Cambridge Gulf and Lake Argyle (refer Department of Transport).

QUALIFIED SUPERVISOR

Has the required qualifications, skill, experience and technical knowledge to instruct the activity.

REMOTE OR ISOLATED AREAS

Includes any location where medical emergency assistance is more than one hour away by road, air and/or water.

SAFE LANDING POINT

Where a person can safely enter and/or exit the water unassisted. This excludes areas unsuitable for landing that may include but are not limited to; vertical cliffs, low lying reefs, or areas affected by rebounding waves.

SHORE

An area of land adjacent to the water. These areas may include low lying land, a beach, wharf, jetty or similar rigid structure attached to land.

SURF

The mass/or line of foam created by swell and the breaking of waves against the shore.

SWIMMING POOL

A controlled, indoor or outdoor, still water environment contained within an artificial structure, monitored for water quality.

UNPROTECTED WATERS

Waters beyond **400 metres** from the shore

WHITE WATER

Where the water current is sufficient enough to create hydrological features that may include but are not limited to; rapids, eddies, whirlpools etc. *See the following International River Grading System guidance to assist with the identification of white water.*

INTERNATIONAL RIVER GRADING SYSTEM	
<i>Grade/ Class of White Water</i>	<i>Classification</i>
1	EASY: Slow to medium flowing water with very small, regular waves or riffles. Relatively few obstacles, with an easy path to find and follow. Suitable for novices.
2	MEDIUM: Rapids are straightforward with medium sized, regular waves. The path through the rapids can be easily seen from the water and is often indicated by well-defined chutes or V's of water. There are some obstacles that require manoeuvring around, but paddlers with a good command of basic strokes can easily miss them.
3	DIFFICULT: Rapids have moderate, irregular waves and strong currents. Manoeuvring is required to follow the preferred route. Small to medium sized stoppers may have to be negotiated. The route is difficult for inexperienced paddlers to see and scouting is advisable. Suitable for experienced white-water paddlers, with the ability to roll an advantage.
4-6	White water rafting on Grade/Class 4 rapids or above is <u>strictly prohibited</u> .

2. ENVIRONMENT

Each aquatic environment is unique, and open/unprotected water environments can be more hazardous than calm/protected water environments.

When assessing the suitability of a location, access to resources, services and facilities also need to be considered (for example, toilets, drinking water, external communication and assistance).

Students must only be exposed to environments or locations that have been assessed and deemed appropriate by the Department Teacher-in-charge for the students' capacity, skills and experience, the planned activities, and the supervision required.

Research and/or a reconnaissance trip must be conducted around desired locations well in advance to confirm sites are suitable for the group size and competency levels.

Water depth must be appropriate for the activity.

Supervisors must be aware of the occurrence of rogue waves, which may be up to twice the height of current swell. Approximately 1 in every 7 waves will be higher than the average swell conditions on any given day.

Strong winds can differ from location to location (for example, calm versus open water). Activities **must not** occur, if strong wind or gale warnings are current or forecast.

Paddling activities **must not** be conducted in strong tidal areas, on a lee-shore where there is no safe landing point (for example, where there is wind blowing on-shore in rocky areas), where a river is in flood, or in known estuarine crocodile habitats. Refer to Be Crocwise for additional information.

If activities are in ocean or estuarine environments, checks must be made directly prior to the activity regarding shark sightings or alerts in the area of use. In the event of a shark sighting

the activity may need to be postponed or modified. Information is available from the [SharkSmart](#) website. The activity must be cancelled immediately if a shark warning alert is sounded.

Sea kayaking **must not** be conducted beyond **5km** of shore (refer to supervision tables for year-level requirements).

It is recommended that wave ski activities are conducted at patrolled beaches. Wave ski areas should be determined in consultation with beach control authorities.

WEATHER CONSIDERATIONS

Weather conditions must be assessed and monitored in the days leading up to, on the day of, and during the activity. The supervisory team may need to cancel, modify or relocate the activity at any time. If weather conditions deteriorate and become unfavourable, all participants must return to shore immediately. The Department Teacher-in-charge must check the [Bureau of Meteorology](#) for up-to-date conditions and weather warnings.

Prior to conducting the activity, the Department Teacher-in-charge should access information regarding wave height, weather and coastal conditions:

- Surf Life Saving WA (SLSWA) *website or SLSWA X (previously Twitter)*
- [Beachsafe](#)
- [Bureau of Meteorology](#)
- [Weatherzone](#)
- [Seabreeze](#)
- [Swellnet](#).

Consideration must be given to wind-eddies, rocks, shallows and other navigational hazards.

Guidance

Sources of information regarding the venue may include:

- *the venue manager*
- *the local ranger or land manager*
- *experienced paddlers with knowledge of the location*
- *paddling club*
- *books, guides, articles*
- *a professional lifeguard*
- *other schools that have conducted similar activities in that location*
- *an external provider*
- [Outdoors WA](#).

Selected areas may be defined by the use of on shore marker buoys, flags, natural features or other nominated craft.

3. CAPACITY OF STUDENTS

Prior to commencing any paddling activity, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that each student has the capacity and/or support to enable them to control the craft at the proposed location, as well as the swimming and water safety skills to participate safely.

The Department Teacher-in-charge in consultation with the Qualified Supervisor, determines whether the students will need to develop additional skills to safely participate in all activities, particularly if an expedition is proposed. Additional activities planned for the expedition (for example, camping) must meet the mandated requirements in the relevant activity specific document.

Primary-aged students must **only** undertake seated paddling activities in swimming pools or calm water environments. Primary school students are **not** permitted to use stand-up paddle boards.

Students must be able to demonstrate the required lead-up skills for the paddle craft. These may include:

- where spray decks are used, students are practiced and experienced in their use
- demonstrate proficiency in capsize and exit drills.

Students with a disability or impairment, or who have had limited exposure to water-based activities, may participate in paddling activities provided adequate safety and control measures are implemented. Specific consideration is given to:

- the impact of the student's ability to safely participate in the activity
- location and access
- water supervision levels
- suitable flotation devices, if required
- providing curriculum adjustments so the student can access the activity on the same basis as their peers
- availability and suitability of the craft
- on-shore assistance and supervision.

Alternative, modified or adjusted activities must be provided for students who do not have the capacity to participate.

The Department Teacher-in-charge and relevant supervisors must be aware of health care maintenance and/or any intensive health care needs of students, particularly allergic reactions to stings or bites in a marine environment. Protective equipment such as gloves and appropriate exposure suits should be considered for students who are susceptible.

Students who have a medically diagnosed condition that may impact their safety must be cleared by a medical practitioner before they can participate.

A re-assessment of students' capacity is undertaken if any circumstances surrounding the activity change. This includes any change in the condition of the aquatic environment, their medical fitness, or their capacity to undertake the activity.

Guidance

The Department's Swimming and Water Safety Continuum and the Safety Survival Sequence (refer to Swimming and Water Safety Activities document) within the Swimming Instructors Handbook and Guidelines and Royal Life Saving Swim and Survive Instructor Assessment Guide are useful resources for gauging students' swimming and water safety skills. They are only indicative of student skills at the time of assessment and their use does not guarantee students' safety, nor reduce a teacher's duty of care responsibilities.

Prior to engaging in paddling activities, students should be able to:

- swim 200 metres in less than seven (7) minutes; and
- support themselves in water for a minimum of fifteen (15) minutes without the aid of a flotation device.

Calm water - non-fixed locations

Where students are developing additional techniques and/or increasing their repertoire of skills as part of an educational course, a formal assessment of basic paddling skills should be conducted. Where the distance travelled from a calm water, non-fixed location is greater than 200m from the initial entry point, participants should also be able to:

- keep their craft within 50 metres of the instructor at all times
- swim under a craft with an approved Level 100 or 50 life jacket and surface on the other side

- *use and check equipment appropriately*
- *select attire that is appropriate to various conditions*
- *perform basic paddling strokes*
- *(for example, basic craft manoeuvres such as pivoting, performing lateral, forwards and backwards movements, turning, carrying out; support, bracing and emergency stops)*
- *empty a craft*
- *perform a self-rescue*
- *conduct a deep water assisted rescue.*

Open waters and white water

Before paddling on open waters, in addition to the skills expected for calm water non-fixed locations, students should also be able to:

- *perform basic paddling strokes including support bracing*
- *perform basic manoeuvres, including emergency stops*
- *conduct practical capsizes and broadside drills and procedures*
- *conduct buddy gear checks*
- *carry out self, T or X rescues and other relevant safety practices.*

4. STUDENT HEALTH CARE

Refer to [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) for further requirements.

5. ACTIVITIES

Activities conducted in aquatic environments require a high degree of risk analysis and management.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must assess the full range of activities to be conducted as part of the paddling program, before making final decisions about the activities and areas to be used.

Activity boundaries and procedures must be clearly defined to the supervisory team and students prior to launching, to prevent craft becoming dispersed.

Rafting

White water rafting on Grade/Class 4 rapids or above is prohibited.

There must be a strong educational benefit to include rafting as part of a teaching and learning program, for it to be deemed appropriate. Each student must demonstrate their proficiency in the grade of water in which the rafting activity will be undertaken.

Paddling

Primary school students (Years K-6) are **not** permitted to use stand-up paddle boards (SUPs).

For all other paddling activities primary school students must remain in a calm water environment and not travel greater than **100 metres** from a safe landing point at any time.

For secondary school students (Years 7-12), when the distance travelled in calm water is greater than **200 metres** from a safe landing point, the following parameters must be adhered to:

- there must be no more than twelve (12) craft per supervisor
- the group must stay within 400m of a safe landing point.

For open water activities it is recommended that trips are planned to follow the natural coastline.

If a crossing is greater than **1km** (for example, paddling from island to island), a safety or support craft must be present.

Sea kayaking

Sea kayaking **must not** be conducted beyond **5km** of shore.

To clarify information about coastal voyage such as a sea trek, contact the Department of Transport Marine.

Guidance

Time available and distances to be travelled are based on the slowest or least competent member of the group. Time should be allowed for portaging, lining, rest, mishaps and refreshment stops.

Hazards in flowing water including trees, logs, rocks, fences, rapids and other navigational hazards should be viewed and assessed before running them.

There should be only one craft on a rapid at any one time.

6. EQUIPMENT

Prior to the activity, the Department Teacher-in-charge must provide students with an equipment list that includes details about:

- enclosed footwear for use in aquatic environments
- protective clothing appropriate for environment (including sun safety) and potential weather conditions
- change of clothes and towel for use after the activity.

It is recommended that students wear brightly coloured, highly visible clothing that suits the activity weather conditions (for example, brightly coloured thermal rash shirts).

Students must be protected from excessive exposure to sunlight increasing the risk of sunburn (for example, using hats, protective clothing, sunblock and sunglasses).

The Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure that all equipment is checked to confirm that it is appropriate to the activity, safe and in working order.

Appropriate first aid equipment must be readily accessible and waterproofed. The first aid kit/s must include items that are appropriate for the activity, environment or location, size and needs of the group, and duration of the activity.

Paddle craft must:

- be of a suitable design and construction for the environmental conditions
- be appropriate for the students' age, capacity and experience
- a design such that: emptying, using the correct technique, does not create an undue physical stress and the crew and gear are supported when the craft is full of water.

Lifejackets

All participants must wear a life jacket at all times when within 3m of the water's edge. Life jackets approved for general use must bear the relevant Standard or stamp (currently AS4758 or ISO 12402) Level 50S or higher, when paddling on all waters.

Whistles must be attached to lifejackets.

All lifejackets *must* be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's advice. The supervisory team must confirm that the condition of the life jackets is checked to ensure there are no cuts or tears and straps and buckles are in good condition.

For further information about lifejackets, refer to the Department of Transport Marine.

Hard shell helmets with drainage holes must be worn while paddling in water where there may be safety hazards (for example, rapids, tree sections and surf).

If proceeding more than **400 metres** from the shore in open/unprotected waters, all craft must carry a compliant GPS enabled Personal Locator Beacon (PLB) or Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB), as well as two red and two orange handheld flares or an Electronic Visual Distress Signal (EVDS). If using a PLB it must be attached to the participant in the case that they become separated from the vessel. Please refer to the Department of Transport Marine.

For extended offshore voyages, consider travelling with another paddle craft or support craft and logging on and off with the local volunteer marine rescue group.

In case of emergency, appropriate communication equipment must be readily available. Mobile phones must be available for use in an emergency situation (with allowance made for the fact that they do not operate in all localities). Where there is no mobile phone coverage, MHZ, MF/HF or VHF radios should be used (27- MHz radios are being phased out and will no longer be compliant from 1 September 2028). A satellite phone is an alternative option. Consideration should be given to carrying a GPS enabled EPIRB and/or the viability of participating in water-based activities in locations where access to emergency services and communication is limited.

Communication equipment (whistles, phones, radios etc.) must be waterproofed, secure and readily accessible at all times.

For information on safety, equipment rules and responsibilities refer to Department of Transport Marine.

Guidance

It is recommended that the Department Teacher-in-charge takes or delegates responsibility to an appropriate supervisor for the group's first aid kit and communication devices.

All water paddling - non-fixed locations

For all paddling activities in non-fixed locations the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the group carries the following items:

- a repair kit
- spare paddle
- throw bag
- tow rope
- first aid equipment
- spare dry clothing
- high energy food
- rescue kit for moving water
- emergency communications equipment.

The rescue kit for all paddle activities, in all water environments, must include:

- a whistle
- a throw bag containing 15 metres of floating non-absorbent static rope that is 8-10 millimetres in diameter
- two carabiners
- two prussiks
- a tape sling
- 50cm of 25mm breathing tube - as a minimum

- a life-saving ring or inflatable lifejacket
- a sharp knife
- a rescue saw, if in white water.

All emergency gear must be stowed in, or tied securely to, the craft.

Open water paddling activities

The **lead supervisor's craft** must carry:

- safety equipment recommended by the Department of Transport
- relevant communication devices (for example, an in-date registered GPS enabled EPIRB or PLB when operating more than **400m** offshore, on extended or remote coastal tours, or if it is anticipated that the marine transceiver could be ineffective)
- an in-date inshore distress flare kit
- one bilge pump for each group of six kayaks (if not self-draining - not applicable for group one craft except open canoes)
- two red handheld flares, and two orange smoke flares
- a first aid kit
- 15 metres of 7mm diameter buoyant, brightly coloured rope that can be attached to the kayak.

For trips beyond **1km** offshore: a marine radio or transceiver that is functional in the area of the activity and a heliograph mirror must be carried.

Beyond **400 metres** from a shore **all other paddle craft** must carry:

- two red handheld flares or an in-date GPS enabled EPIRB/PLB attached to a participant
- a bailer or pump (not applicable for group one craft except open canoes)
- spray decks to be worn in conditions where waves or surf may be encountered (not applicable for group one craft)
- a whistle (attached to life jacket) for each participant
- appropriate paddles for the craft
- a supply of fresh water; the amount to be determined by the Department Teacher-in-charge.

Safety or support power craft

Where a safety or support power boat is required to accompany paddlers, the craft must comply with Department of Transport *Marine: Recreational Boating* or the *Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act 2012* requirements.

A safety tether lanyard must be worn by the power boat driver at all times.

Guidance

For further information about specific water environments refer to:

- *Australian Adventure Activity Good Practice Guide: Enclosed and Coastal Waters Paddle-craft.*
- *Australian Adventure Activity Good Practice Guide: Inland Water Paddle-craft.*

Handholds should be securely fitted to the bow and stern of canoes and kayaks in such a way that a full hand cannot be inserted through the loop.

Paddle length should be appropriate to the size and strength of the students.

Information about safety equipment, rules and regulations can be accessed through the Department of Transport, Marine Safety.

7. THE SUPERVISORY TEAM

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

8. EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure that external providers are made aware of the documentation they need to provide, or that must be sighted.

External providers must follow all mandated requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures and will be asked to supply copies of certain documentation, and/or make them available for the Department Teacher-in-charge to sight. External providers should familiarise themselves with Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix D: External Provider Checklist.

9. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team members possess skills in paddling, and have the appropriate recent and relevant experience, knowledge and skills to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during paddling activities.

Minimum qualifications and/or formal training accreditations:

Different levels of supervision are required for canoeing, kayaking and sea kayaking activities in open and calm water locations; and for activities conducted from fixed and non-fixed locations.

The supervisory team must collectively:

- be able to perform first aid (hold a current first aid qualification that is relevant to the activity and location)
- be able to administer CPR (have current CPR accreditation) have documented activity-specific evidence of recent and relevant experience
- have a current aquatic rescue qualification and experience in performing rescues that are appropriate for paddling activities at the proposed location.

At least one member of the supervisory team must hold the following:

<i>Environment</i>	<i>Supervisors must have:</i>	<i><u>AND</u> an aquatic rescue qualification</i>
Calm water (fixed location)	• Recent logged experience and skills in the type of craft used at the location; or • Flat water skills set; or • An equivalent (or higher) award, as recognised by the Director General.	A relevant aquatic rescue for the intended environment: • Skill set to effect deep water rescues for intended craft/s and one of the following: • RLSSA <i>Bronze Medallion</i> • SLSSA <i>Bronze Medallion</i> • RLSSA <i>School Teacher Aquatic Rescue Training</i> (START) certificate • Surf Life Saving WA (SLSWA) <i>Community Surf Rescue</i> certificate.
Calm water (non-fixed location)	• Recent logged experience and skills in the type of craft used at the location; and • Flat water guide qualification: or • An equivalent (or higher) award, as recognised by the Director General.	A relevant aquatic rescue for the intended environment: • Skill set to effect deep water rescues for intended craft/s and one of the following: • RLSSA <i>Bronze Medallion</i> • SLSSA <i>Bronze Medallion</i>

		• RLSSA <i>School Teacher Aquatic Rescue Training</i> (START) certificate • Surf Life Saving WA (SLSWA) <i>Community Surf Rescue</i> certificate.
Open water: Group one craft	• Recent logged experience and skills in the type of craft used at the location and one of the following: • Coastal guide qualification • Sea skills qualification or higher • Flat water guide qualification, with moving water endorsement • An equivalent (or higher) award, as recognised by the Director General.	A relevant aquatic rescue for the intended environment: • Skill set to effect deep water rescues for intended craft/s and one of the following: • RLSSA <i>Bronze Medallion</i> • SLSSA <i>Bronze Medallion</i> • RLSSA <i>School Teacher Aquatic Rescue Training</i> (START) certificate • Surf Life Saving WA (SLSWA) <i>Community Surf Rescue</i> certificate.
Open water - (within 200m fixed location): Group two craft	• Recent logged experience and skills in the type of craft used at the location and one of the following: • Flat water guide qualification with moving water endorsement • An equivalent (or higher) award, as recognised by the Director General.	A relevant aquatic rescue for the intended environment: • Skill set to effect deep water rescues for intended craft/s and one of the following: • SLSSA <i>Bronze Medallion</i> • RLSSA <i>School Teacher Aquatic Rescue Training</i> (START) certificate • Surf Life Saving WA (SLSWA) <i>Community Surf Rescue</i> certificate.
White water (up to and including Grade 2 rapids): Group two craft	• Recent logged experience and skills in the type of craft used at the location and one of the following: • White water guide qualification • Flat water guide with moving water endorsement • An equivalent (or higher) award, as recognised by the Director General.	A relevant aquatic rescue for the intended environment: • Skill set to effect deep water rescues for intended craft/s and one of the following: • Paddle Australia <i>White Water Rescue 1</i> (or higher) award • SLSSA <i>Bronze Medallion</i> • RLSSA <i>School Teacher Aquatic Rescue Training</i> (START) certificate • <i>Swift Water Rescue</i> (or higher) award (comprising 3 units of competency).
Open water (within 1000m of the shore): Group two craft	• Recent logged experience and skills in the type of craft used at the location and one of the following: • Enclosed Sea Guide qualification • An equivalent (or higher) award, as recognised by the Director General.	A relevant aquatic rescue for the intended environment: • Skill set to effect deep water rescues for intended craft/s and one of the following: • Paddle Australia <i>White Water Rescue 1</i> (or higher) award • SLSSA <i>Bronze Medallion</i>. • RLSSA <i>School Teacher Aquatic Rescue Training</i> (START) certificate • <i>Swift Water Rescue</i> (or higher) award (comprising 3 units of competency).
Open water (locations greater than 1000m and less than 5000m from the shore): Group two craft	• Recent logged experience and skills in the type of craft used at the location and • Sea Guide qualification or • An equivalent (or higher) award, as recognised by the Director General.	• <i>Swift Water Rescue</i> (or higher) award (comprising 3 units of competency).

Guidance

Rescue and resuscitation qualifications are current for twelve months.

When venturing **beyond 200 metres** from the initial launching point in open water, there must be at least two experienced supervisors at all times. One of these supervisors must be a Qualified Supervisor who leads the activity; the other experienced (or qualified) supervisor assists.

Safety or support craft

Where a safety or support craft is used, the supervisor in control of the craft must:

- hold a *Recreational Skippers Ticket* (RST)
- demonstrate skills in handling the craft being used
- wear a safety tether lanyard at all times
- have recent and logged experience in performing rescue and retrieving a paddle craft
- either be a qualified and experienced *Safety Boat Operator* or hold one of the following:
 - an Australian Sailing *Power Boat Handling certificate* (PBH)
 - *Surf Life Saving Australia Inshore Rescue Boat Driver* award
 - *Rescue Water Craft Operator* award
 - hold a relevant commercial ticket.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must be satisfied that the supervisor operating a safety or support craft has recent, relevant and logged experience in providing relevant support and effecting a rescue for the activity and location.

Skills and experience

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team:

- has recent, relevant and logged experience in the activity at the level being offered to students
- has the relevant qualifications (including first aid and CPR)
- understands the emergency responses and supervision responsibilities.

It is recommended that all members of the supervisory team have recent, relevant and logged experience in paddling activities, are able to demonstrate paddling skills in the type of craft being used at the location, and have knowledge of:

- paddling techniques and specific paddle craft instruction
- specific local weather patterns and land and/or marine weather forecasts for the duration of the activity
- emergency response procedures
- rescue techniques
- group management.

As water conditions can alter suddenly, members of the supervisory team conducting kayaking activities in an ocean environment should also have experience and knowledge of:

- sea kayak instruction
- rescue techniques
- the location of other possible boat traffic, particularly shipping lanes
- coastal navigation techniques, including using coastal charts and marine navigation markers
- boating regulations
- tide charts and local tide conditions and local surf zones, rips and current, including surf types and patterns if surf is likely to be encountered.

Guidance

Records of qualifications

A record of staff swimming and water safety qualifications should be maintained by the school. The date of issue of the qualification and formal notification of any subsequent renewal or upgrade should be included. Staff should keep a logbook of specific activity experience including skills practiced, hours completed, location observations and observable weather conditions.

10. MINIMUM LEVELS OF SUPERVISION

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team members possess skills in the relevant paddling activities and have the appropriate experience, knowledge and skills to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during the activity.

The level of risk in aquatic environments is dynamic and must be constantly monitored and assessed. The appropriate number of supervisors directly monitoring students in the water must be maintained at all times.

Different levels of supervision are required for:

- group one craft and group two craft activities
- open and calm water environments
- fixed and non-fixed locations.

In addition to minimum mandated supervision requirements, the Department Teacher in charge must also consider additional requirements after considering the:

- type of activity and type of paddle craft to be used
- age, capacity, experience and skills of each student
- qualifications, capacity and experience of the supervisor(s)
- students' medical conditions, disabilities or impairments
- nature of the environment.

For extended offshore voyages, consider travelling with another paddle craft or support craft and logging on and off with the local volunteer marine rescue group.

A second supervisor is not required for all aquatic environments, provided that there are clear systems in place so that supervisors can quickly summon assistance if required.

Greater supervision must be provided for less able students.

Students must be within the Qualified Supervisor's line of sight at all times. If activity goes outside of line-of-sight additional supervisors are required to maintain adequate supervision.

Guidance

The Qualified Supervisor is responsible for the decision for participants to self-guide a river section. If self-guided, each student must be deemed competent to the level considered reasonable for the river section by the Qualified Supervisor.

GROUP ONE PADDLE CRAFT

ALL WATER ENVIRONMENTS AND ALL PADDLE CRAFT

Kindergarten - Year 3

This activity **must not** be undertaken by students in Kindergarten - Year 3.

SWIMMING POOL

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof
- one supervisor for every 12 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor)
- a maximum of eight craft per supervisor.

Year 7 - 12

Recommended two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof
- it is recommended a maximum of 12 craft per supervisor.

CALM WATER - FIXED LOCATION (**WITHIN 200M** OF INITIAL LAUNCHING POINT)

Year 4 – 6

Students in Years 4 – 6 in this environment must **not exceed 100 meters** from a safe landing point at any time.

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof
- one supervisor for every 12 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor) and
- a maximum of eight craft per supervisor.

Year 7 - 12

Recommended two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof and
- it is recommended a maximum of 12 craft per supervisor.

CALM WATER - NON-FIXED LOCATION

Year 4 - 6

Students in Years 4 - 6 in this environment must **not exceed 100 meters** from the shore at any time.

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof
- one supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor) and
- a maximum of six craft per supervisor.

Year 7 - 12

Calm water environments must **not exceed 400 meters** from shore at any point in time.

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof
- one supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor) and
- a maximum of 12 craft per supervisor.

OPEN WATER AND WHITE WATER UP TO GRADE 2 RAPIDS - FIXED LOCATION (**WITHIN 200M** OF INITIAL LAUNCHING POINT)

Years 4 - 6

This activity **must not** be undertaken by students in Kindergarten - Year 6.

Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof
- one supervisor for every 12 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor) and
- a maximum of eight craft per supervisor.

OPEN WATER - NON-FIXED LOCATION: **0M – 1KM** FROM SAFE LANDING POINT

Kindergarten - Year 9

This activity **must not** be undertaken by students in Kindergarten - Year 9.

Years 10 - 12

There must be two Qualified Supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof
- one supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor) and
- a maximum of six craft per supervisor.

OPEN WATER: 1KM to 5KM FROM SAFE LANDING POINT

Kindergarten - Year 10

This activity **must not** be undertaken by students in Kindergarten - Year 10.

Years 11 and 12

There must be two Qualified Supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every four students or part thereof and
- a maximum of four craft per supervisor.

The following table illustrates the supervision requirements for common group sizes. Groups at all times must remain within the prescribed supervision ratios and any limits set out earlier in this document.

GROUP ONE PADDLE CRAFT

<i>Year level</i>	<i>Environment</i>	<i>Number of student s</i>	<i>Qualified Supervisor</i>	<i>Assistant Supervisor</i>	<i>Total supervisory team</i>
K - 3	All water environments	Not permitted.			
4 - 6	Swimming pool	1 - 24	1	1	2
	Calm water- fixed location (0 - 200m) (within 100m of a safe landing point at all times)	1 - 24	1	1	2
	Calm water- non-fixed location (within 100m of the shore at all times)	1 - 16	1	1	2
	Open water	Not permitted			
7 - 12	Swimming pool	1 - 24	1	0	1
	Calm water- fixed location (0 - 200m)	1 - 24	1	0	1
	Calm water- non-fixed location (within 400m of a the shore at all times)	1 - 24	1	1	2
		25 - 32	2	0	2
	Open water and White Water - up to grade 2 rapids - fixed location (0 - 200m).	1 - 16	1	1	2
		17 - 24	2	0	2
		25 - 32	2	1	3
7 - 9	Open water – non-fixed location - 0m - 1000m from a safe landing point.	Not permitted			
10 -12	Open water – Non-fixed location - 200m - 1000m from a safe landing point	1 - 16	1	1	2
		17 - 24	2	1	3
7 - 10	Open water - 1000m - 5000m from a safe landing point	Not permitted			
11 - 12	Open water-1000m - 5000m from a safe landing point	1 - 8	2	0	2
		9 - 12	3	0	3
		13 - 16	4	0	4

GROUP TWO PADDLE CRAFT

ALL WATER ENVIRONMENTS AND ALL PADDLE CRAFT

Kindergarten - Year 3

This activity **must not** be undertaken for students in Kindergarten to Year 3.

SWIMMING POOL

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof
- one supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor) and
- a maximum of eight craft per supervisor.

Year 7 - 12

Recommended two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof and
- a maximum of 12 craft per supervisor.

CALM WATER - FIXED LOCATION (WITHIN **200M** OF INITIAL LAUNCHING POINT)

Year 4 - 6

Students in Years 4 - 6 in this environment must **not exceed 100 meters** from a safe landing point at any time.

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof
- one supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor) and
- a maximum of eight craft per supervisor.

Year 7 - 12

Recommended two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof and
- a maximum of 12 craft per supervisor.

CALM WATER - NON-FIXED LOCATION

Year 4 - 6

Students in Years 4 - 6 in this environment must **not exceed 100 meters** from a safe landing point at any time.

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof
- one supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor) and
- a maximum of six craft per supervisor.

Year 7 - 12

Calm water environments must **not exceed 400m** from shore at any point in time.

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof
- one supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor) and
- a maximum of 12 craft per supervisor.

OPEN WATER AND GRADE 2 RAPIDS - FIXED LOCATION (WITHIN 200M OF INITIAL LAUNCHING POINT):

Kindergarten - Year 6

This activity **must not** be undertaken by students in Kindergarten to Year 6.

Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof
- one supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor) and
- a maximum of eight craft per supervisor.

OPEN WATER NON-FIXED LOCATION: 200M – 1KM SAFE LANDING POINT

Kindergarten - Year 9

This activity **must not** be undertaken by students in Kindergarten to Year 9.

Year 10 - 12

There must be two Qualified Supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every eight students or part thereof
- one supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor) and
- a maximum of six craft per supervisor.

OPEN WATER: 1KM – 5KM SAFE LANDING POINT

Kindergarten - Year 10

This activity **must not** be undertaken by students in Kindergarten to Year 10.

Year 11 and 12

There must be two Qualified Supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every four students or part thereof and
- a maximum of four craft per supervisor.

The following table illustrates the supervision requirements for common group sizes. Groups at all times must remain within the prescribed supervision ratios and any limits set out earlier in this document.

GROUP TWO PADDLE CRAFT

Year level	Environment	Number of students	Qualified Supervisor	Assistant Supervisor	Total supervisory team
K - 3	All water environments	Not permitted			
4 - 6	Swimming pool	1 - 16	1	1	2
		17 - 24	1	2	3
		25 - 32	2	2	4
	Calm water- fixed location (0 - 200m) (within 100m of a safe landing point at all times)	1 - 16	1	1	2
		17 - 24	2	1	3
		25 - 32	2	2	4
	Calm water- non-fixed location (within 100m of the shore at all times)	1 - 16	1	1	2
		17 - 24	2	1	3
		25 - 32	2	2	4
	Open water	Not permitted			
7 - 12	Swimming pool	1 - 24	1	0	1
		Larger groups are not recommended			
	Calm water- fixed location (0 - 200m)	1 - 22	1	0	1
	Calm water- non-fixed location (within 400m of the shore at all times)	1 - 16	1	1	2
		17 - 32	2	0	2
	Open water and Grade 2 rapids fixed location (0 - 200m)	1 - 16	1	1	2
		17 - 24	2	1	3
		25 - 32	2	2	4
K - 9	Open water – non-fixed location 200m - 1000m from a safe landing point	Not permitted			
10 -12	Open water – non-fixed location 200m - 1000m from a safe landing point	1 - 8	1	1	2
		9 - 16	2	0	2
		17 - 24	3	0	3
		25 - 32	4	0	4
K - 10	Open water - 1000m - 5000m from a safe landing point	Not permitted			
11 - 12	Open water - 1001m - 5000m from a safe landing point	1 - 8	2	0	2
		9 - 12	3	0	3
		13 - 16	4	0	4

11. SUPERVISION STRATEGIES

Supervision strategies must:

- confirm that the safety and well-being of students is maintained at all times
- reflect risks associated with the activity
- address circumstances when students are not in clear view of the supervisors
- include students who are not actively participating in the activity.

The appropriate number of supervisors directly monitoring students in the water must be maintained at all times.

All students and members of the supervisory team must conduct appropriate safety checks prior to commencing the activity, and at critical times throughout.

Direct communication must be maintained with students at all times.

Larger groups may need to be separated into pods of smaller sizes. Each pod should have the appropriate supervisory requirements, safety, first aid and communication equipment.

Canoes and kayaks should travel in pods with a maximum diameter spread of 100 metres on rivers, or 200 metres on the ocean.

Supervisors are to monitor students continuously for signs of fatigue or exhaustion.

If other schools or groups are using the same venue, potential risks must be identified, and supervisory strategies put in place to deal with the nature and number of those groups, and any risks that might arise from that situation.

Guidance

For paddling trips, a lead craft is designated whose occupant/s are aware of the planned route and can direct the group to scheduled stops.

A tail craft is also designated.

It is recommended that:

- *rules are established to confirm that all students remain in close proximity to the supervisors*
- *a supervisor with a current first aid qualification travels at the rear of the group*
- *a buddy system is established so that students can monitor and check the safety and wellbeing of their partner*
- *a regular head count of all participants is conducted.*

Safety or support craft

A safety or support craft must accompany craft travelling **beyond 1km off shore**. The craft must comply with Department of Transport Marine requirements. For activities conducted **less than 1km from shore**, it is recommended that support craft accompany the paddling activity and are appropriate to support the paddle craft being used and affect a rescue if required.

A safety tether lanyard must be worn by the safety or support powerboat driver at all times.

Supervisors must exercise particular caution when students are entering, boarding and/or snorkelling near the propellers of a vessel. A propeller guard is recommended. Propeller aware strategies must be used whenever a person is in the water.

12. IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must employ systems for identifying students that may include:

- the wearing of lifesaver or swimming caps, neoprene armbands or rash shirts, school t-shirts, vests, bibs, sashes
- confining students to designated areas not being utilised by other schools or members of the public.

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

13. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

14. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix B: Risk Management Plan for further requirements.

15. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix C: Emergency Management Plan for further requirements.

16. BRIEFING STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that all participants are briefed about:

- the educational purpose (learning intentions) and the cooperative nature of the activity
- components of the activity (including skills required, for example “righting” drill procedures, and the importance of staying with the craft)
- standards of behaviour, including roles and responsibilities
- hazard identification and safety requirements
- buddy practices and procedures that will be followed if members of the party become lost or separated from the group
- boundaries marked for the activity
- communication signals to gain attention and request assistance
- emergency and evacuation procedures, signals and location of emergency equipment
- how to identify currents, tides, reefs and other potential hazards of the venue, including safe entry and exit points
- minimal impact principles for that location (Leave No Trace principles).

In addition to the above, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team have been briefed about the following:

- the role and location of supervisors
- maintaining supervision ratios (including of those students not involved in the activity)
- modified/adjusted activity requirements for students with a disability or impairment
- the system for identifying students and supervisors
- the route to be followed including pre-determined stops and/or meeting points along the way (if applicable)
- student-specific medical requirements
- conditions associated with hypothermia, sunburn and dehydration
- communication strategies that will be used throughout the activity, including designated signals to gain the attention of the whole group, and to identify when emergency assistance is required
- location of first aid kit and emergency/rescue equipment
- appropriate clothing for the activity and weather conditions, including thermal and sun protection
- aspects of the environment and expected weather conditions.

Special information sessions must be arranged for students or staff who were absent from preparatory briefings.

Guidance

Changing environmental conditions encountered during paddling activities may necessitate the need to brief students while in transit.

Paddle activities in the surf, open water and white-water environments require a rigorous emergency response plan which considers the:

- *size, age, strength and previous activity experience of participants*
- *skills and experience of the supervising staff*
- *prevailing and forecast weather conditions*
- *availability of a safety or support craft (power boat and/or emergency vehicle) in the event of an emergency*
- *the nature of the location.*

17. INFORMED CONSENT

Refer to [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) for further requirements.



Department of
Education

APPENDIX M: POWER BOATING

EFFECTIVE: 21 JULY 2025

VERSION: 3.1

POWER BOATING

This document contains specific requirements related to power boating activities and must be read in conjunction with *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures*.

1. BACKGROUND

Students participating in power boating activities learn practical boat handling skills and develop understandings about safety, marine regulations, boat maintenance, the use of safety equipment and emergency procedures.

Commercial operators in Australian waters are governed by the Australian Maritime Safety Authority (AMSA) and are therefore held to different operating standards and requirements than those outlined for recreational operators of water vessels. If your planned activity involves the use of a commercial vessel (for example, a ferry) and participants will not be operating the vessel then these procedures do not apply.

DEFINITIONS

ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR

Assists the Qualified Supervisor and or Department Teacher-in-charge. Must have recent and relevant experience in the activity, at the level being offered to the students.

CALM WATER

A still or slow-moving water environment with no to low swell, within **400 meters** of a safe landing point. These areas may include a sheltered or protected coastal area or river, dam, waterhole or inland water body.

DEPARTMENT TEACHER-IN-CHARGE

The member of the teaching staff employed by the Department of Education (or an Approved Provider) and managing the school activity. For information relating to Approved Providers refer to [Appendix A: General Requirements](#).

FIXED LOCATION

Within **1000 metres** of the initial launching point.

KNOT

Refers to the speed of travel undertaken by a water vessel and is a measurement of time required to travel a nautical mile. 1 knot equals one nautical mile per hour (equivalent to 1.852 kilometres).

LOW SWELL

Shore breaking waves that are on average less than 0.5 meters and have a times wave gap of greater than 8 seconds.

NAVIGABLE WATERS

All waters that are considered to be deep, wide and calm enough for a water vessel to pass safely.

NON-FIXED LOCATION

Any area beyond **1000 metres** from the initial launching point.

OPEN WATER

An unprotected water environment that may be fast flowing or turbulent, such as a surf beach, flowing river or waterway, tidal coastal water, or areas affected by swell and or/strong currents. This also applies to calm water areas greater than **400 meters** from a safe landing point.

POWER BOAT

Any watercraft that has a motorised propulsion system.

PROTECTED WATERS

Includes rivers, lakes, estuaries, harbours and waters within 400 meters from the shore in unprotected waters but excludes the Cambridge Gulf and Lake Argyle (refer Department of Transport).

QUALIFIED SUPERVISOR

Has the required qualifications, skill, experience and technical knowledge to instruct the activity.

SAFE LANDING POINT

Where a person can safely enter and/or exit the water unassisted. This excludes areas unsuitable for landing that may include but are not limited to, vertical cliffs, low lying reefs, or areas affected by rebounding waves.

SHORE

An area of land adjacent to the water. These areas may include low lying land, a beach, wharf, jetty or similar rigid structure attached to land.

SKIPPER

The person in charge of operating the vessel. They are responsible for the safety of their vessel, passengers and other water users and must comply with Department of Transport marine laws.

UNPROTECTED WATERS

Waters beyond 400metres from the shore.

2. ENVIRONMENT

Each aquatic environment is unique, and open/unprotected water environments can be more hazardous.

When assessing the suitability of a location, access to resources, services and facilities also need to be considered (for example, toilets, drinking water, external communication and assistance).

Students must only be exposed to environments or locations that have been assessed and deemed appropriate by the Department Teacher-in-charge, for the students' capacity, skills and experience, the planned activities, and the supervision required.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure that research and/or a reconnaissance trip is conducted around proposed locations well in advance, to confirm sites are suitable for the group size and competency levels.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure that weather conditions are assessed and monitored, in the days leading up to the activity, on the day of the activity and throughout the activity. The supervisory team may need to modify or cancel the activity at any time. Check the Bureau of Meteorology for up-to-date conditions and weather warnings. If weather

conditions deteriorate and become unfavourable, all participants must return to the launching point or identified safe landing point immediately.

Prior to conducting the activity, the Department Teacher-in-charge should access information regarding wave height, weather and coastal conditions:

- Surf Life Saving WA (SLSWA) *website or SLSWA X (previously Twitter)*
- [Beachsafe](#)
- [Bureau of Meteorology](#)
- [Weatherzone](#)
- [Seabreeze](#)
- [Swellnet](#).

Care must be taken when operating in areas with reefs and sandbars as these can cause freak waves that have the potential to swamp boats. The Qualified Supervisor must have first-hand knowledge of the area. Consideration must be given to rocks, shallows and other navigational hazards. Changes in depths of the sea, river or estuary floor must be monitored and where possible, any stopping of vessels should be avoided in these areas.

If activities are in ocean or estuarine environments, checks must be made directly prior to the activity regarding shark sightings or alerts in the area of use. In the event of a shark sighting the activity may need to be postponed or modified. Information is available from the [SharkSmart](#) website.

If the power boating activity is not being conducted through an external provider, the Department Teacher-in-charge must contact Department of Transport Marine or the local council to determine whether there are any restrictions on the use of the selected location.

Guidance

Sources of information regarding the venue may include:

- *the venue manager*
- *the local ranger or land manager*
- *experienced power boaters, with knowledge of the location*
- *books, guides, articles*
- *other schools that have conducted similar activities in that location.*

Selected areas are defined by on-shore marker buoys, flags, natural features or other nominated craft.

3. CAPACITY OF STUDENTS

Power boating activities are considered appropriate for students from Year 9 upwards who have been assessed by the Department Teacher-in-charge and deemed to have the capacity and required swimming and water safety abilities/skills to participate safely.

The Department Teacher-in-charge in consultation with the Qualified Supervisor, determines whether the students will need to develop additional skills to safely participate in all activities.

Students over 14 but under 16 years of age are restricted to operating during daylight hours at a speed less than 8 knots.

The Department Teacher-in-charge and relevant supervisors must be aware of health care maintenance and/or any intensive health care needs of students, particularly allergic reactions to stings or bites in a marine environment. Students who have a medically diagnosed condition that may impact their safety must be cleared by a medical practitioner before they can participate.

Students with a disability or impairment, or who have had limited exposure to water, may participate in power boating activities provided adequate safety, control and modification measures are implemented. Specific consideration is given to:

- the impact of the student's ability to safely participate in the activity
- supervision levels
- providing curriculum adjustments so the student can access the activity on the same basis as their peers
- availability and suitability of the craft
- on-shore assistance and supervision.

Alternative or adjusted activities must be provided for students who do not have the capacity to participate.

A reassessment of students' capacity is undertaken if any circumstances surrounding the activity change. This includes any change in the condition of the aquatic environment, their medical fitness, or their capacity to undertake the activity.

Guidance

The Department's Swimming and Water Safety Continuum and the Safety Survival Sequence (refer to Swimming and Water Safety Activities document) within the Swimming Instructors Handbook and Guidelines and Royal Life Saving Swim and Survive Instructor Assessment Guide are useful resources for gauging students' swimming and water safety skills. They are only indicative of student skills at the time of assessment and their use does not guarantee students' safety, nor reduce a teacher's duty of care responsibilities.

Prior to engaging in power boating activities, students should be able to:

- swim 200 metres in less than seven (7) minutes
- support themselves in water for a minimum of fifteen (15) minutes without the aid of a flotation device.

Students are able to complete a Recreational Skipper's Ticket, Power Boat Handling (PBH) certificate or units of competency that relate to boat handling through various training providers.

Students need to be at least 14 years of age to complete the Recreational Skipper's Ticket.

4. STUDENT HEALTH CARE

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

5. ACTIVITIES

Activities conducted in aquatic environments require a high degree of risk analysis and management. The full range of proposed activities is assessed before final decisions are made about activities and environments to be used.

For additional information to support planning for an extended coastal expedition, contact Department of Transport Marine and other relevant agencies (for example, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions).

6. EQUIPMENT

Prior to the activity, the Department Teacher-in-charge must provide students with information regarding suitable clothing and protection including:

- enclosed footwear suitable for use in aquatic environments
- protective clothing appropriate for the environment (including sun safety) and potential weather conditions
- change of clothes and towel for use after the activity.

It is recommended that students wear brightly coloured, highly visible clothing that suits the activity weather conditions and supports identification (for example, brightly coloured thermal rash shirts).

Students must be protected from excessive exposure to sunlight increasing the risk of sunburn (for example, using hats, protective clothing, sunblock and sunglasses).

Appropriate first aid equipment must be readily accessible. The first aid kit must include items appropriate for the activity, environment, size and needs of the group, and duration of the activity.

Powerboats must:

- be of a suitable design and construction for the environmental conditions
- be appropriate for the students' skills, size and experience
- be constructed or fitted with additional aids so that they remain buoyant when swamped
- not carry more participants than the design recommendation
- be licenced and carry all mandatory safety equipment in accordance with the Department of Transport *Marine: Recreational Boating*.

Lifejackets

Each participant must wear a minimum level 100 lifejacket at all times on or near water. Lifejackets approved for general use must bear the relevant Standard or stamp (currently AS 4758 or ISO 12402). Whistles must be attached to lifejackets.

All lifejackets must be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's advice. The supervisory team must confirm that the condition of the life jackets is checked prior to use, to ensure there are no cuts or tears and straps and buckles are in good condition.

For further information about lifejackets, refer to Department of Transport *Marine*.

A powered safety or support craft must be available for instruction and supervision and ready to respond in the event of an emergency. The craft must comply with Department of Transport *Marine: Recreational Boating* or *Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act 2012* requirements.

A safety tether lanyard must be worn by the power boat drivers at all times.

In case of emergency, appropriate communication equipment must be readily available. Mobile phones must be available for use in an emergency situation (with allowance made for the fact that they do not operate in all localities). Where there is no mobile phone coverage, MHz, MF/HF or VHF radios should be used (27- MHz radios are being phased out and will no longer be compliant from 1 September 2028). A satellite phone is an alternative option. Consideration should be given to carrying a GPS enabled EPIRB and/or the viability of participating in water-based activities in locations where access to emergency services and communication is limited. Communication equipment (whistles, phones, radios etc.) must be waterproofed, secure and readily accessible at all times.

For all powerboating activities in all waters the Qualified Supervisor must confirm that students know how to operate and that the boat carries, a:

- bilge pump/bailer
- fire extinguisher
- level 100 (or higher) life jacket for each person on board.
- fresh water
- first aid kit
- torch
- rope

- heliograph mirror
- tool kit
- alternative power, oars or paddles.

In open waters, additional items must be carried including:

- an anchor and line
- a registered GPS enabled 406MHz EPIRB or PLB (PLB must be worn)
- two red and two orange flares (in date)
- an Electronic Visual Distress Signal.

All safety equipment must be:

- in good working condition and meet appropriate standards or specifications
- maintained or serviced according to the manufacturers specifications
- replaced before the manufacturers expiry date
- easy to access
- secured or stowed in the craft.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must, through their risk management, plan for all reasonably foreseeable circumstances including confirming access to an emergency vehicle if it should be required.

Students must be restricted to a maximum engine size of 6hp (4.5kw) unless accompanied in the craft by a Qualified Supervisor, when completing Recreational Skipper's Ticket training.

For more information relevant to per boating activities refer to Department of Transport Marine for safety equipment, rules and WA regulations.

7. THE SUPERVISORY TEAM

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

8. EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

External providers acting as the Qualified Supervisor must hold one of the following:

- a Australian Sailing Powerboat Handling (PBH) certificate
- a Recreational Skipper's Ticket assessor (RST) endorsement
- a recognised commercial qualification or
- an equivalent qualification, as recognised by the Director General. The qualification must include current rescue and resuscitation components.

An Assistant Supervisor must hold a *Recreational Skipper's Ticket* (RST).

The Department Teacher-in-charge must be satisfied that the external provider has met the minimum qualification and experience requirements and can provide currency in the relevant first aid and aquatic rescue competencies appropriate to the water environment in which they will be operating. (see Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix D: External Provider Checklist).

9. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team members possess skills in power boating and have the appropriate recent and relevant experience to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during power boating activities. This includes proficiency in rescue techniques appropriate to the type of craft being used and the water environment.

Supervisory team members must also have current knowledge of common injuries associated with the activity and first aid experience in dealing with those injuries.

The Qualified Supervisor must hold a current, activity-specific qualification and/or have attained current, activity-specific competencies through a recognised tertiary institution or Registered Training Organisation (RTO) including one of the following:

- an authorised *Recreational Skipper's Ticket* assessor (RST)
- an *Australian Sailing Powerboat Handling (PBH) certificate*
- a recognised commercial qualification

The Qualified Supervisor must also have recent and relevant logged experience and demonstrated skills in the type of craft being used.

The Qualified Supervisor must hold an appropriate aquatic rescue, resuscitation and CPR accreditation. Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements* for mandated:

- first aid and CPR qualifications
- evidence requirements for all qualifications and competencies.

Safety/support craft

Assistant Supervisors in control of the support or safety power boat must hold one of the following:

- a *Recreational Skipper's Ticket* (RST)
- *Safety Boat Operator*
- an Australian Sailing (AS) *Power Boat Handling certificate* (PBH)
- a *Rescue Watercraft Operator* award
- a relevant commercial ticket.

Assistant Supervisors must also:

- demonstrate skills in handling the craft being used
- be experienced in performing a rescue in retrieving and towing a power craft.

Guidance

It is recommended that supervisors maintain evidence of their currency and experience through the use of a logbook, or similar.

10. MINIMUM LEVELS OF SUPERVISION

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team members possess skills in the relevant power boating activities and have the appropriate experience, knowledge and skills to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during the activity.

The level of risk in aquatic environments is dynamic and must be constantly monitored and assessed. The appropriate number of supervisors directly monitoring students in the water must be maintained at all times.

Group sizes and supervision levels are determined by the Department Teacher-in-charge, after considering the:

- type of activity and size of craft to be used
- age, experience and capacity of each student
- qualifications, capacity and experience of the supervisor(s)
- students' medical conditions, disabilities or impairment
- location and nature of the environment.

Students must be within the line of sight of the Qualified Supervisor at all times. A second supervisor is not required in calm water-fixed location environments, provided that there are clear systems in place for the supervisor to quickly summon assistance if required.

For all power boating activities:

- there is a maximum number of six (6) craft permitted per Qualified Supervisor

- each supervisor must be in a separate craft.

Kindergarten - Year 8

Power boating **must not** be undertaken for students in Year K - 8 due to the dynamic nature of the activity.

CALM WATER - FIXED LOCATION (**WITHIN 1KM** OF INITIAL LAUNCHING POINT)

Year 9 - 12

It is recommended that there are at least two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 18 students or part thereof.

CALM WATER - NON FIXED LOCATION (**BEYOND 1KM** OF INITIAL LAUNCHING POINT)
AND OPEN WATER

Year 9 - 12

There must be at least two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 18 students or part thereof.

The following table illustrates the minimum supervision requirements for common group sizes. Larger groups are not recommended.

<i>Year Level</i>	<i>Environment</i>	<i>Number of Students</i>	<i>Qualified Supervisor</i>	<i>Experienced Assistant Supervisor</i>	<i>Total Supervisory team</i>
K - 8	All water environments	This activity must not be undertaken for students in Years K - 8			
9 - 12	Calm water: fixed location	1 - 18	1	0	1
	Calm water: non-fixed location	1 - 18	1	1	2
	Open Water	1 - 18	1	1	2

Guidance

The level of supervision may need to be reviewed, depending on the size of the craft used.

The number of craft may be reduced in the early stages of the program, after allowing students time to establish basic operational skills (or example, controlling six students who can drive is less difficult than controlling three who cannot drive), or in less favourable weather conditions.

11. SUPERVISION STRATEGIES

Supervision strategies must:

- confirm that the safety and well-being of students is maintained at all times
- reflect risks associated with the activity
- address circumstances when students are not in clear view of the supervisors
- include students who are not actively participating in the activity.

The appropriate number of supervisors directly monitoring the students must be maintained at all times.

Supervisors must be appropriately attired to provide assistance during the activity.

All supervisors must be familiar with the location of emergency equipment.

All participants must conduct appropriate safety checks prior to the commencement of the activity, and at critical times throughout.

Supervisors must exercise particular caution when students are entering, boarding or near the propellers of a vessel. The use of propeller guards are recommended. *Propeller aware strategies* must be used whenever a person is in the water.

Rules must be established before the activity commences to confirm that all power boats in transit remain in close proximity to supervisors, particularly during poor weather conditions. A lead or support power boat must be designated for power boating expedition. The supervisors must be aware of the planned route and be able to provide guidance to or direct the group to scheduled stops.

Guidance

Consideration is given to positioning, scanning and safety check systems (see Swimming and Water Based Activities).

Buddy practices are established so that students can monitor and check the safety and wellbeing of their partner or buddy craft.

12. IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must employ systems for identifying students that may include:

- the wearing of lifesaver or swimming caps, neoprene armbands or rash shirts, school t-shirts, vests, bibs, sashes
- confining students to designated areas not being utilised by other schools or members of the public.

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements* for further requirements.

Guidance

Power boats should be clearly marked and easily identifiable.

Where students and supervisors involved in the power boating activity are the sole participants at the venue, the Department Teacher-in-charge may decide that there is no need to introduce an identification system.

13. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements* for further requirements.

14. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Refer to: *Appendix A: General Requirements* and *Appendix B: Risk Management Plan* for further requirements.

15. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Refer to: *Appendix A: General Requirements* and *Appendix C: Emergency Response Plan* for further requirements.

16. BRIEFING STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that all participants are briefed about:

- the educational purpose (learning intentions) and the cooperative nature of the activity
- components of the activity (including skills required)
- standards of behaviour, including roles and responsibilities
- hazard identification and safety requirements
- buddy practices and procedures that will be followed if members of the party become lost or separated from the group

- boundaries marked for the activity
- communication signals to gain attention and request assistance
- emergency and evacuation procedures, signals and location of emergency equipment
- how to identify currents, rips, reefs and other potential hazards of the venue, including safe entry and exit points
- minimal impact principles for that location (Leave No Trace principles).

In addition to the above, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team have been briefed about the following:

- the role and location of supervisors
- maintaining supervision ratios (including of those students not involved in the activity)
- modified/adjusted activity requirements for students with a disability or impairment
- the system for identifying students and supervisors
- the route to be followed including pre-determined stops and/or meeting points along the way (if applicable)
- student-specific medical requirements
- conditions associated with hypothermia, sunburn and dehydration
- communication strategies that will be used throughout the activity, including designated signals to gain the attention of the whole group, and to identify when emergency assistance is required
- location of first aid kit and emergency/rescue equipment
- appropriate clothing for the activity and weather conditions, including thermal and sun protection
- aspects of the environment and expected weather conditions.

Special briefing sessions must be arranged for students who were absent from preparatory briefings.

Guidance

Changing environmental conditions encountered during power boating activities may require the need to brief students whilst in transit.

17. INFORMED CONSENT

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.



**Department of
Education**

APPENDIX N: ROPES COURSES AND BOULDERING

EFFECTIVE: 21 JULY 2025

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ROPES COURSES AND BOULDERING

This document contains specific requirements related to ropes courses and bouldering activities and must be read in conjunction with *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures*.

1. BACKGROUND

A ropes course is an activity which usually consists of a series of challenges completed along tensioned ropes with high and/or low elements. Ropes courses are also known as challenge ropes courses.

Bouldering is a free solo climbing activity of short duration and at low height, used to foster perseverance and resilience.

Separate advice provided in the *Appendix E: Abseiling and Climbing* activity specific document must also be consulted if any part of a participant's body is above 2.4m in height from ground level or these activities are included as a part of the ropes courses and bouldering activities.

DEFINITIONS

ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR

Assists the Qualified Supervisor and or Department Teacher-in-charge. Must have recent and relevant experience in the activity, at the level being offered to the students.

AUTO BELAY

A device that acts independently from human involvement taking up slack as the participant ascends a surface. When the device is placed under tension (for example, in the event of a fall) the device catches and then slowly lowers the participant to the ground.

BELAY

Controlling a safety rope attached to people or equipment as a back-up in the case of primary system failure or climber fall. Belaying may be done from above (top belay) or below (bottom belay) the participant depending on the nature of the activity and/or the environment.

BOULDERING

A form of rock climbing performed at low heights (where any part of a person's body remains below 2.4m in height from ground level) on small rock formations or artificial surfaces without the use of harnesses or ropes.

DEPARTMENT TEACHER-IN-CHARGE

The member of the teaching staff employed by the Department of Education (or an Approved Provider) and is managing the school activity. For information relating to Approved Providers refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements*.

HIGH ROPES COURSE

Usually constructed at heights in trees or in artificial settings and requires fall safety mechanisms such as a belay system using harnesses, specialist safety equipment or other established methods or systems.

HARNESS HANG SYNDROME (SUSPENSION TRAUMA)

Can occur when a participant is suspended within a harness for a prolonged period of time causing blood to pool. This has the potential to lead to shock, unconsciousness and/or death.

LOW ROPES COURSE

A tension roped course usually constructed less than one metre above the ground in trees or in artificial settings. Participant safety can be achieved by spotting, using an impact absorbing system (matting, soft-sand etc) or by a combination of these measures.

QUALIFIED SUPERVISOR Has the required qualifications, skill, experience and technical knowledge to instruct the activity.

SLACKLINING

The act of walking or balancing along a suspended length of flat webbing tensioned between two anchor points and where any part of a participant's body is less than 2.4m above ground level.

2. ENVIRONMENT

The Department Teacher-in-charge must determine the suitability of the venue after considering each student's capacity, skills and experience, the planned activity and the supervision required.

For bouldering activities, the physical characteristics of the site (exposure, access, and level of difficulty) must be taken into account, with specific attention to loose or slippery rocks, surface texture and any obstacles that may impact student safety.

Ropes courses **must not** be used in excessive winds, wet conditions, during lightning and electrical storms or in extremely hot conditions. The weather forecast must be checked before, and also regularly throughout the activity, as it might be necessary to cancel, modify or relocate the activity at any time. Check the [Bureau of Meteorology](#) for up-to-date conditions and weather warnings.

The design and proportion of the ropes course and equipment needs to be suitable for participants.

Guidance

Key sources of information regarding the venue may include:

- *the venue manager*
- *the local ranger or land manager*
- *other schools that have conducted similar activities at that location*
- *external providers and/or*
- *Outdoors WA.*

3. CAPACITY OF STUDENTS

High ropes courses that include abseiling and climbing may be offered for students from Year 5 as part of a sequential and developmentally appropriate documented program of instruction (refer also to [Appendix E: Abseiling and Climbing](#)).

Prior to commencing a ropes course, bouldering, or slacklining activity, the Qualified Supervisor must determine whether each student has the capacity and maturity to participate safely and can manage safety systems.

Primary-aged school students

Ropes courses that include abseiling and climbing activities (generally high-ropes courses) are not considered suitable for primary students in Kindergarten to Year 4 as younger students:

- generally, do not possess the necessary degree of responsibility and maturity to meet all requirements of the activity
- stages of physical growth and development are usually not suitable.

Primary-aged students to Year 4, may participate in the controlled environments if:

- the selected ropes course or bouldering activity is deemed educationally appropriate
- the selected ropes activity is deemed appropriate for the capacity of the students' to safely participate
- a supervising adult is controlling any belaying systems.

Students with a disability or impairment may participate in ropes courses and bouldering if adequate safety and control measures are implemented. Specific consideration must be given to:

- the type and level of disability or impairment
- location and access
- providing curriculum adjustments so the student can access the activity on the same basis as their peers.

Students who have a medically diagnosed condition that may impact on their safety must be cleared by a medical practitioner before they can participate.

Alternative activities are to be provided for students who do not have the capacity to participate.

4. STUDENT HEALTH CARE

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements* for further requirements.

5. ACTIVITIES

The full ropes course is assessed by the Qualified Supervisor in consultation with the Department Teacher-in-charge to inform the final selection of the course elements appropriate for the student cohort.

A low ropes course, bouldering or slack lining activity must not include climbing activities where any part of a person's body is above 2.4m in height. If a participant is required to climb above 2.4 metres or if abseiling is required to complete any ropes course, refer to the *Appendix E: Abseiling and Climbing* for appropriate qualifications and supervision ratios.

Facilities that include use of auto belay devices are required to produce certificates of inspection for the devices as follows:

- Indoor facilities: Current certificate of inspection (every 12 months)
- Permanent external facilities: Current certificate of inspection (every 6 months).

The use of auto belay devices with mobile climbing walls or structures are prohibited.

Use of body belays are not permitted.

The maximum number of students permitted to participate on each element at any one time must be clearly communicated to both staff and students.

Students and supervisory staff must be briefed, prior to the start of the activity, about the activity requirements and safety aspects (see *Briefing* section in this document).

Guidance

Students should be progressively introduced to elements associated with ropes courses and bouldering, that include:

- *belaying on high ropes and spotting on low ropes*
- *working together as a small team*
- *ascending and descending from the high ropes course*
- *procedural instructions for the specific ropes courses*
- *the use of safety equipment.*

Low ropes courses and Slacklining

Low ropes courses and Slacklining are often incorrectly perceived as having a lower risk than high ropes courses because of the absence of a roped safety system and their proximity to the ground. However, safety on low ropes courses and when slacklining, is dependent on the participants' maturity, capacity and concentration, as well as the quality of instruction and appropriate level of supervision.

Students of younger primary school age, generally do not have the ability or maturity to participate as spotters. Older students can participate as spotters, if the Qualified Supervisor has confirmed that each student taking part has the capacity and reactions required. Spotters on low ropes elements need to be in a position to support the upper part of the participant's body (specifically the head) to minimise potential impact with the ground. Specific techniques for spotting must be instructed to the supervisory team prior to commencement of the activity by a Qualified Supervisor.

Spotters must actively watch the participant in order to anticipate their movements.

Stable floor cushioning or mats/crash mats specifically designed for the purpose should be used for landing areas where participants are more than 1 metre above the ground. Any cushioning provided must have an even surface, with no gaps between the mats.

Bouldering

Individuals involved in the spotting of participants who are bouldering or traversing require a thorough briefing, demonstration of the procedures to follow, and a high level of supervision.

When climbing with any part of the body above 2.4 metres, all participants must be on a top rope belay, except where lead climbing is being taught. Refer to [Appendix E: Abseiling and Climbing](#).

Participants can only solo or traverse unroped if all parts of their body remain below a clearly established line no greater than 2.4 metres above the ground. On artificial settings this is clearly marked line that has been painted or taped 2.4 metres above the floor. Unroped activities **must not** be conducted unless the facility has this line in place, or, in natural settings, this line has been established.

The floor, walls and area within 2.4 metres of any part of the climb should be free and clear of sharp hazards (see more information on cushioning in Section 6 Equipment).

High ropes courses

Before using high ropes courses where safety harnesses will be used, students must be trained, monitored as they practise how to clip on and lock carabiners to harnesses, and taught how to belay (if applicable).

Climbers participating on a high ropes course must be attached to the belay line with:

- a direct tie-in, using a follow through figure eight knot
- a direct tie-in plus a single carabiner that has an isolation loop (for example, an alpine butterfly) and/or
- two reversed and opposed locking carabiners.

A Qualified Supervisor must complete a visual check of the belay and personal safety checks before allowing each student to proceed.

Participants on a high ropes course must be on a top belay system and adequately supervised at all times.

In the case of a static belay position, the belayer must be attached to the belay system, which is anchored to the floor or a wall. Back-up belayers do not have to be anchored.

Mobile or dynamic belay systems require the belayer to be attached to the belay system.

The back-up belayer is permitted to move independently to allow freedom of movement and flexibility of position (whichever is considered to be safer in the circumstances). There must be a minimum of three hands on the brake side of the belay at all times.

6. EQUIPMENT

All equipment must be fully inspected by the Qualified Supervisor and deemed safe to use, prior to and at critical times throughout the activity, and immediately after use.

Purpose designed equipment that meets appropriate Standards must be used for all activities that involve abseiling, climbing and the use of ropes.

A transition belay system and adequate supervision on each platform between high elements is essential for the safety of participants who are between element safety belays.

Manufacturers specifications, instructions and recommendations must be adhered to.

Annual safety inspections of ropes courses must be conducted by a competent person who is not involved in the day-to-day operations. This can be undertaken by a qualified rigger, independent industry expert or independent organisation that is able to inspect the whole facility (as required by the relevant Australian Standard - AS 2316.1.1:2021, or successor).

Refer to [Appendix E: Abseiling and Climbing](#) for mandated auto-belay inspection requirements.

Ropes, tapes, cords, harnesses, helmets, hardware and slacklines must be retired after five years (unless the manufacturer specifies the service life). Equipment **must not** be used if there is any doubt about its integrity.

The Qualified Supervisor in consultation with the Department Teacher-in-charge, must be satisfied with the inspections and maintenance of all relevant equipment. Regular maintenance checks of all equipment must be conducted, logged and records maintained. Facility and equipment maintenance logbooks include:

- item identification system
- manufacturers specification for equipment usage
- date of purchase and/or date of manufacture
- date of initial use and proposed date of retirement
- frequency and type of use
- copies of maintenance inspection and/or construction conformance paperwork and date and details of maintenance.

Any temporary elements must be erected by qualified personnel who are competent in the erection and supervision of challenge ropes courses.

Steel carabiners are recommended for use on ropes courses.

Each participant must wear:

- appropriate clothing
- a correctly fitting harness and hardware (i.e. other specialist equipment specific to the activity)
- a hard-shell climbing or roping helmet (with a secure chinstrap), that meets the relevant Australian Standard for all high ropes courses
- gloves of an appropriate size worn on each hand while handling moving rope (exemptions apply where *Slow Go* pulleys are used)
- fully enclosed footwear
- other specialist equipment specific to the activity that meets Australian Standards.

It is recommended that for low ropes courses students are fitted with helmets.

Emergency and rescue equipment (for example, rope slings, spare carabiners, access ladder, etc.) must be readily accessible.

Appropriate first aid equipment must be readily accessible. The first aid kit must include items appropriate for the activity, environment, size and needs of the group, and duration of the activity.

Cushioning

It is recommended where a participant's feet are in excess of one (1) metre from safe ground, that cushioning or crash mats are provided and positioned so that there is no possibility of contacting the hard floor surface if a participant falls. This is part of a multi-barrier approach and other risk management options such as pulleys should also be considered.

Stable floor cushioning or mats/crash mats specifically designed for the purpose are used for landing areas when bouldering and/or traversing, and where spotters are not used.

Any cushioning provided must have an even surface, with no gaps between the mats or the wall.

Guidance

For further information, refer to *Australian Adventure Activity Good Practice Guide: Challenge Courses*.

A broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen should be applied as per manufacturer's recommendations. Drinking water should be available at all times.

7. THE SUPERVISORY TEAM

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements* for further requirements.

8. EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure that when booking an external provider, they are made aware of the documentation that they need to provide, or that must be sighted.

External providers must follow all mandated requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures will be asked to supply copies of certain documentation, and/or make them available for the Department Teacher-in-charge to sight. External providers should familiarise themselves with *Appendix A: General Requirements* and *Appendix D: External Provider Checklist*.

9. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team members possess skills in ropes courses and bouldering activities and have recent and relevant experience, knowledge and skills to identify and manage potential risks at all stages during activities.

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for mandated:

- first aid qualifications
- evidence requirements for all qualifications of competencies.

At all times, ropes courses and bouldering activities must be supervised by qualified and inducted personnel who are experienced and competent in the erection and supervision of the bouldering course, climbing or ropes apparatus.

At least one member of the supervisory team must be able to affect a support and rescue for all climbing activities offered within the program, including where harness hang syndrome is suspected.

Minimum qualifications and/or formal training requirements (where any part of a participant's body is **more than 2.4 metres from the ground**, the minimum qualification/s apply):

The Qualified Supervisor must have:	AND proof of experience:
The Qualified Supervisor must hold a current, activity-specific qualification and/or have attained current, activity-specific competencies through a recognised tertiary institution or Registered Training Organisation (RTO) including: • relevant units in Challenge Ropes Courses or Bouldering completed as a part of a Certificate III (or higher) in Outdoor Recreation or Leadership; or • an equivalent qualification, as recognised by the Director General.	• Relevant, logged evidence that confirms that they have regularly updated their in-service training on the supervision of ropes courses.

In an activity where all of a participant's body **remains below 2.4 metres from the ground**, recent and relevant logged experience must be demonstrated.

Skills and experience

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team:

- has experience in the activity at the level being offered to students
- has the relevant qualifications
- has current First Aid and CPR qualifications
- understands the emergency responses and supervision responsibilities.

Supervisors should have relevant, logged evidence that confirms that they have regularly updated their in-service training on the supervision of ropes courses.

For challenge ropes courses, each Qualified Supervisor must have:

- recent logged experience in single-rope techniques and rescue training (including individual and partner belay systems and self-rescues)
- familiarity with the hazards of ropes courses
- the understandings and skills required to identify and manage potential risks at any stage of the activity
- competency in dealing with emergencies that are consistent with the type of activity and equipment being used
- working knowledge in the selection, use, maintenance and storage of course equipment.

All Qualified Supervisors must have training and experience in checking belay systems.

The logged experience must be validated by a qualified individual. A qualified individual is a person who can meet the Qualified Supervisor requirements in this activity specific document. In the case of site-specific competencies, the qualified individual would refer to the provider administering the competency to school staff.

Guidance

It is recommended that supervisors maintain evidence of their currency and experience through the use of a logbook.

10. MINIMUM LEVELS OF SUPERVISION

Supervisory requirements must take into consideration the:

- purpose of the activity
- age, experience and capacity of each student
- students' medical conditions or disabilities
- supervisors' competence and experience
- competence of supervisors at the venue
- type of activity to be undertaken
- nature of the environment
- location of the activity.

Greater supervision must be provided:

- for less able students who are participating in activities
- if the design and position of the course requires higher supervision levels
- where difficult elements are included on the course.

LOW ROPES COURSES AND BOULDERING

Year K - 4

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

LOW ROPES COURSES, HIGH ROPES COURSES AND BOULDERING

Participation in high ropes courses is not permitted for students in Kindergarten - Year 4.

Year 5 and Year 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one qualified supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 -12

There must be one supervisor at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Students must be within the Qualified Supervisor's line of sight at all times. If an activity goes outside of line of sight, a second supervisor is required to maintain adequate supervision.

The following table illustrates the minimum supervision requirements for common group sizes. Groups may be larger than those indicated here but must remain within the prescribed supervision ratios and any limits set out earlier in this document.

Year	Activity	Number of Students	Qualified Supervisor	Experienced Assistant Supervisor	Total Supervisory team
K - 4	Low Ropes Courses and Bouldering	1 - 16	1	1	2
		17 - 24	1	2	3
K - 4	High Ropes Courses	Not permitted			
5 - 6	Low Ropes Course, High Ropes Course & Bouldering	1 - 24	1	1	2
		25 - 32	2	0	2
7 - 12	Low Ropes Course, High Ropes Course & Bouldering	1 - 16	1	0	1
		17 - 24	1	1	2
		25 - 32	2	0	2

11. SUPERVISION STRATEGIES

Supervision strategies must be confirmed by the Department Teacher-in-charge to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students is maintained at all times.

The appropriate number of supervisors directly monitoring the students must be maintained at all times.

The supervisory team should have a clear view of all students at all times.

Supervisors conduct safety checks on all participants and equipment prior to the commencement of, and during the transition between various elements of the course.

Students not directly involved with the ropes courses must be supervised. The area underneath the course must be kept free from bystanders.

Spotters must watch participants at all times whilst on the course, in order to anticipate their moves and be in a position to support the upper part of the participants' body (specifically the head) in order to minimise potential impact with the ground.

Individuals involved in the spotting of participants who are bouldering or traversing should be provided with a specific briefing, demonstration of the procedures to follow, and a high level of supervision.

Belayers must be directly supervised when lowering participants.

A buddy or team system is established so that students can check the safety and wellbeing of their partner(s).

Participants who do not display a responsible attitude or behaviour are to be removed from the activity. Alternative activities are provided for students who do not have the capacity to participate.

12. IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Students and supervisors must be easily identifiable.

A system of identification is determined by the Department Teacher-in-charge and may include:

- the wearing of coloured helmets, armbands or school shirts
- confining students to designated areas not being utilised by other schools or members of the public.

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

13. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

14. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix B: Risk Management Plan for further requirements.

Risk management plans must include possibility of harness hang syndrome and an appropriate action plan for when harness hang syndrome is suspected.

15. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix C: Emergency Response Plan for further requirements.

16. BRIEFING STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that all participants are briefed about:

- the educational purpose (learning intentions) and the cooperative nature of the activity
- components of the activity (including skills required)
- standards of behaviour, including roles and responsibilities
- hazard identification and safety requirements
- buddy practices (and lost buddy procedures when applicable)
- physical boundaries marked for the activity
- communication signals to gain attention and request assistance
- emergency and evacuation procedures
- minimal impact principles for that location (see Leave No Trace principles).

In addition to the above, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team have been briefed about the following:

- the role and location of supervisors
- maintaining supervision ratios (including of those students not involved in the activity)
- modified/adjusted activity requirements for students with a disability or impairment
- the system for identifying students and supervisors
- student-specific medical requirements
- conditions associated with hypothermia, sunburn and dehydration
- communication strategies that will be used throughout the activity, including designated signals to gain the attention of the whole group, and to identify when emergency assistance is required
- location of first aid kit and emergency/rescue equipment
- appropriate clothing for the activity and weather conditions, including thermal and sun protection
- aspects of the environment and expected weather conditions.

Special information sessions must be arranged for students or staff who were absent from preparatory briefings.

17. INFORMED CONSENT

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements* for further requirements.



Department of
Education

APPENDIX O: SAILING AND SAIL BOARDING

EFFECTIVE: 21 JULY 2025

VERSION: 3.1

SAILING AND SAIL BOARDING

This document contains specific requirements related to sailing and sail boarding activities and must be read in conjunction with *Appendix A: The General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures*.

1. BACKGROUND

Sailing, sail boarding and wind surfing activities are conducted by schools in a variety of locations and environments, including the ocean, lakes, rivers and other inland water bodies.

Any person operating sailing craft, sail boards or windsurfers must comply with Department of Transport marine laws.

DEFINITIONS

ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR

Assists the Qualified Supervisor and/or Department Teacher-in-charge and must have relevant qualifications and experience.

CALM WATER

A still or slow-moving water environment with no to low swell, within **400 meters** of a safe landing point. These areas may include a sheltered or protected coastal area or river, dam, waterhole or inland water body.

DEPARTMENT TEACHER-IN-CHARGE

The member of the teaching staff employed by the Department of Education (or an Approved Provider) and is managing the school activity. For information relating to Approved Providers refer to Appendix A: General Requirements.

FIXED LOCATION

Within **1km** of the initial launching point.

NON-FIXED LOCATION

Any area beyond **1km** from the initial launching point.

OPEN WATER

An unprotected water environment that may be fast flowing or turbulent, such as a surf beach, flowing river or waterway, tidal coastal water, or areas affected by swell and or/strong currents. This also applies to calm water areas greater than **400 meters** from a safe landing point.

PROTECTED WATERS

Includes rivers, lakes, estuaries, harbours and waters within **400 meters** from the shore in unprotected waters but excludes the Cambridge Gulf and Lake Argyle (refer Department of Transport).

QUALIFIED SUPERVISOR

Has the required qualifications, skill, experience and technical knowledge to instruct the activity.

REMOTE OR ISOLATED AREAS

Includes any location where medical emergency assistance is more than one hour away by road, air and /or water.

SAFE LANDING POINT

Where a person can safely enter and/or exit the water unassisted. This excludes areas unsuitable for landing that may include but are not limited to, vertical cliffs, low lying reefs, or areas affected by rebounding waves.

SAILING

An activity in which vessels are propelled across bodies of water by sails.

SAIL BOARDING

Sailing on a sailboard that is equipped with a mast, sail, and wishbone boom.

SHORE

An area of land adjacent to the water. These areas may include low lying land, a beach, wharf, jetty or similar rigid structure attached to land.

UNPROTECTED WATERS

Waters beyond **400metres** from the shore.

WINDSURFING

A form of sailing, standing on a board that is powered across the water by the wind.

2. ENVIRONMENT

Each aquatic environment is unique, and open/unprotected water environments can be more hazardous than calm/protected water environments.

When assessing the suitability of a location, access to resources, services and facilities also need to be considered (for example, toilets, drinking water, external communication and assistance).

Students must only be exposed to environments or locations that have been assessed and deemed appropriate by the Department Teacher-in-charge, for the students' capacity, skills and experience, the planned activities, and the supervision required.

Research and/or a reconnaissance trip must be conducted around desired locations well in advance to confirm sites are suitable for the group size and competency levels.

Water depth must be appropriate for the activity.

Supervisors must be aware of the occurrence of rogue waves, of up to twice the height of current swell and approximately 1 in every 7 waves will be higher than the average swell conditions on any given day.

Strong winds can differ from location to location (for example, calm versus open water). Activities **must not** occur if strong wind or gale warnings are current or forecast.

Sailing activities must not be conducted in strong tidal areas, on a lee-shore where there is no safe landing point (for example, where there is wind blowing on-shore in rocky areas), where a river is in flood, or in known estuarine crocodile habitats. Refer to Be Crocwise for additional information. Consideration must also be given to wind-eddies, rocks, shallows and other navigational hazards.

If activities are in ocean or estuarine environments, checks must be made directly prior to the activity regarding shark sightings or alerts in the location of use. In the event of a shark sighting the activity may need to be postponed or modified. Information is available from the SharkSmart website.

The activity must be cancelled immediately if a shark warning alert is sounded, and the students/staff removed from the water.

WEATHER CONSIDERATIONS

Weather conditions must be assessed and monitored in the days leading up to, on the day of, and during the activity. The supervisory team may need to cancel, modify or relocate the activity at any time. If weather conditions deteriorate and become unfavourable, all participants must return to shore immediately. Check the [Bureau of Meteorology](#) for up-to-date conditions and weather warnings.

Prior to conducting the activity, the Department Teacher-in-charge should access information regarding wave height, weather and coastal conditions:

- Surf Life Saving WA (SLSWA) *website or SLSWA X (previously Twitter)*
- [Beachsafe](#)
- [Bureau of Meteorology](#)
- [Weatherzone](#)
- [Seabreeze](#)
- [Swellnet](#)

If the sailing activity is not being conducted by an Australian Sailing provider, the Department Teacher-in-charge must check with Department of Transport [Marine](#) and/or the local council, to determine whether there are any restrictions on the use of the selected location.

Guidance

Sources of information regarding the venue may include:

- *the venue manager*
- *the local ranger or land manager*
- *experienced sailors, sailboarders or windsurfers, with knowledge of the location*
- *sailing clubs*
- *books, guides, articles*
- *a professional lifeguard*
- *other schools that have conducted similar activities in that location*
- *an external provider*
- [Outdoors WA](#).

Selected areas should be defined by on shore marker buoys, flags, natural features or other nominated craft.

3. CAPACITY OF STUDENTS

Prior to commencing any sailing activity, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that each student has the capacity and/or support to enable them to control the craft at the proposed location, as well as required swimming and water safety skills to participate safely.

The Department Teacher-in-charge in consultation with the Qualified Supervisor, determines whether the students will need to develop additional skills to safely participate in all activities, particularly if an expedition is proposed. If additional recreation and/or outdoor education activities are planned, the mandated requirements in the relevant activity specific documents apply.

Introductory Learn-to-Sail courses are most suitable for students in Years 4 and 5.

The Department Teacher-in-charge and relevant supervisors must be aware of health care maintenance and/or any intensive health care needs of students, particularly allergic reactions to stings or bites in a marine environment. Protective equipment such as gloves and appropriate exposure suits should be considered for students who are susceptible.

Students with a disability or impairment, or who have had limited exposure to water-based activities, may participate in sailing and sailboarding activities provided adequate safety, control and modification measures are implemented. Specific consideration is given to:

- the impact of the student's ability to safely participate in the activity
- location and access
- supervision levels
- suitable flotation devices, if required
- curriculum adjustments to enable student access to the activity on the same basis as their peers
- availability and suitability of the craft
- on-shore assistance and supervision.

Students who have a medically diagnosed condition that may impact on their safety must be cleared by a medical practitioner before they can participate. A re-assessment of students' capacity is undertaken if any circumstances surrounding the activity change. This includes any change in the condition of the aquatic environment, their medical fitness, or their capacity to undertake the activity.

Guidance

The Department's Swimming and Water Safety Continuum and the Safety Survival Sequence (refer to Swimming and Water Safety Activities document) within the Swimming Instructors Handbook and Guidelines and Royal Life Saving Swim and Survive Instructor Assessment Guide are useful resources for gauging students' swimming and water safety skills. They are only indicative of student skills at the time of assessment and their use does not guarantee students' safety, nor reduce a teacher's duty of care responsibilities.

Prior to engaging in sailing activities, students should be able to:

- swim 200 metres in less than seven (7) minutes
- support themselves in water for a minimum of fifteen (15) minutes without the aid of a flotation device
- carry out capsize drills and procedures
- use their life jacket with proficiency.

4. STUDENT HEALTH CARE

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

5. ACTIVITIES

Activities conducted in aquatic environments require a high degree of risk analysis and management. The full range of proposed activities is assessed before final decisions are made about activities and environments to be used.

Every person operating sailing vessels (including dinghies, fixed-keel yachts and catamarans), sailboards and windsurfers have a responsibility to take all necessary steps to avoid a collision. Sailboarders and windsurfers must not impede or obstruct the safe and lawful passage of another vessel (refer to Department of Transport Marine).

Wind speed should be monitored. Beginners **must not** sail in an offshore wind that is over five (5) knots.

Sailing activities **must not** occur more than **5000 metres (5 km)** from a safe landing point. Refer to Section 10: Minimum Levels of Supervision, for year group requirements and distance from a safe landing point.

For additional information to support planning for an extended coastal expedition, such as a sea trek, contact Department of Transport Marine and other relevant agencies (for example, Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions).

6. EQUIPMENT

Prior to the activity, the Department Teacher-in-charge must provide students with information regarding suitable clothing and protection including:

- enclosed footwear suitable for use in aquatic environments
- protective clothing appropriate for the environment (including sun safety) and potential weather conditions
- change of clothes and towel for use after the activity.

It is recommended that students wear brightly coloured, highly visible clothing that suits the activity weather conditions and supports identification (for example, brightly coloured thermal rash shirts).

All equipment must be checked to confirm that it is appropriate to the activity, correctly sized, safe and in good working order.

Appropriate first aid equipment must be readily accessible. The first aid kit must include items appropriate for the activity, environment, size and needs of the group, and duration of the activity.

Guidance

It is recommended that the Department Teacher-in-charge takes or delegates responsibility to an appropriate supervisor for the group's first aid kit and communication devices (which must be waterproofed).

The Qualified Supervisor must confirm correct rigging before any sailing craft is allowed on the water.

Sailing craft **must not** carry more participants than the design recommendation.

Sailing craft must:

- be of a suitable design and construction for the environmental conditions
- be appropriate for the students' capacity and experience
- be constructed or fitted to be buoyant when swamped
- have a mainsail that is capable of being lowered easily by hand when the sailing craft is in an upright or a capsized position.

Lifejackets

Each participant must wear a lifejacket at all times when on or near water. Lifejackets approved for general use must bear the relevant Standard or stamp (currently AS 4758 or ISO 12402) Level 50S or higher when paddling on all waters.

Whistles must be attached to lifejackets.

All lifejackets *must* be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's advice. The supervisory team must confirm that the condition of the life jackets is checked prior to use, to ensure there are no cuts or tears and straps and buckles are in good condition.

For further information about lifejackets, refer to Department of Transport [Marine](#).

If towing a sail craft, tow ropes can be used. In some instances, it may be necessary to secure the tow rope to the base of the mast (by looping it around several times), or the mast tabernacle (the fitting the mast is fixed to), as these would better accommodate the pressure of towing.

Gloves of an appropriate size should be worn for protection when pulling ropes.

In case of emergency, appropriate communication equipment must be readily available. Mobile phones must be available for use in an emergency situation (with allowance made for

the fact that they do not operate in all localities). Where there is no mobile phone coverage, MHz, MF/HF or VHF radios should be used (27- MHz radios are being phased out and will no longer be compliant from 1 September 2028). A satellite phone is an alternative option. Consideration should be given to carrying a GPS enabled EPIRB and/or the viability of participating in water-based activities in locations where access to emergency services and communication is limited. Communication equipment (whistles, phones, radios etc.) must be waterproofed, secure and readily accessible at all times.

For **sailboat** activities the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that students know how to operate, and that the boat carries the following items:

- bilge pump/bailer (if they do not have an enclosed self-draining hull)
- fire extinguisher (if the vessel can be powered by a motor)
- level 50S (or higher) life jacket must be worn by each student on board.

In open waters (**beyond 400m** from shore):

- anchor and line
- A GPS enabled 406 MHz EPIRB or, if worn by at least one person, a GPS enabled Personal Location Beacon (PLB), in date and registered with the Australian Marine Safety Authority (AMSA).
- two red and two orange flares (in date) or Electronic Visual Distress Signal (EVDS) (an electronic signalling device may be carried in lieu of flares IF a GPS enabled EPIRB or PLB (must be worn) is also carried).

Sailboarders and windsurfers are required to carry safety equipment in accordance with the WA marine laws. For windsurfing/sailboarding activities, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that students know how to operate and that they carry the following:

- level 50S (or higher) life jacket must be worn.

In open waters (beyond 400m from shore):

- A 406 MHz PLB or EPIRB registered with AMSA
- At least two handheld red flares and two handheld orange flares.

In all cases, in open waters it is recommended a PLB is attached to the person on the craft in case they become separated from the vessel.

For information on safety, equipment rules and responsibilities refer to Department of Transport Marine.

Safety or support power craft

A powered safety or support craft must be available for instruction and supervision at all sailing and sailboarding activities. The craft must comply with Department of Transport Marine: Recreational Boating or Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act 2012 requirements.

A safety tether lanyard must be worn by the power boat driver at all times.

Guidance

In areas where strong winds are likely to affect the program, a smaller set of sails should be available. Alternatively, it should be possible to reef larger sails, or to drop one set of sails to depower the vessel.

Sailing craft should be fitted with sturdy tow rings.

The centreboard should be sufficiently robust to resist distortion when supporting the weight of at least one crew member during the act of up righting a craft after capsizing. Centreboards should be secured to the hull so that they remain in the centreboard case when the hull is inverted.

Rudders should be secured to the hull.

Students should be made aware that the care and maintenance of equipment is an integral part of sailing.

7. THE SUPERVISORY TEAM

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

8. EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure that external providers are made aware of the documentation they need to provide, or that must be sighted.

External providers must follow all mandated requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures and will be asked to supply copies of certain documentation, and/or make them available for the Department Teacher-in-charge to sight. External providers should familiarise themselves with Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix D: External Provider Checklist.

9. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team members possess skills in sailing activities and have the appropriate recent and relevant experience to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during the activities. This includes proficiency in rescue techniques appropriate to the type of craft being used and the water environment.

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for mandated:

- first aid qualifications
- evidence requirements for all qualifications of competencies.

The supervisory team must collectively:

- be able to perform first aid (hold a current first aid qualification that is relevant to the activity and location)
- be able to administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation (have current CPR accreditation) have documented activity-specific evidence of recent and relevant experience
- have a current aquatic rescue qualification and experience in performing rescues that are appropriate for sailing or sail-boarding activities at the proposed location.

Minimum qualifications and/or formal training requirements:

The Qualified Supervisor must hold a current, activity-specific qualification and/or have attained current, activity-specific competencies through a recognised tertiary institution or Registered Training Organisation including:

Activity	Qualified Supervisor requirements (at least ONE)
Dinghy/Small Boat Sailing	• Australian Sailing <i>Dinghy Instructor</i> certificate • Australian Sailing <i>Dinghy Racing Instructor</i> certificate • Relevant units in <i>Small Boat Sailing</i> completed as a part of a <i>Certificate III</i> (or higher) in Outdoor Leadership • an equivalent qualification, as recognised by the Director General.
Sail boarding or windsurfing	• Australian Sailing <i>Windsurfing Instructor</i> certificate • Australian Sailing <i>Windsurfer Racing Instructor</i> certificate • <i>Windsurfing Senior Instructor</i> certificate • Relevant units in <i>Sail Boarding or Wind Surfing</i> completed as a part of a <i>Certificate III</i> (or higher) in Outdoor Leadership • an equivalent qualification, as recognised by the Director General.
Keelboat	• Australian Sailing <i>Keelboat Instructor</i> certificate • Australian Sailing <i>Keelboat Racing Instructor</i> certificate • an equivalent qualification, as recognised by the Director General.

Safety or support powerboat

The supervisor in control of the safety or support craft must:

- hold a *Recreational Skipper's Ticket* (RST)
- demonstrate skills in handling the craft being used
- have recent logged experience in performing a rescue and retrieving and towing a sail craft
- either be a qualified and experienced *Safety Boat Operator*, or hold one of the following:
 - an Australian Sailing (AS) *Power Boat Handling certificate* (PBH)
 - a *Surf Life Saving Australia Inshore Rescue Boat Driver* award
 - a *Rescue Water Craft Operator* award
 - a relevant commercial ticket.

Skills and experience

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team:

- has recent, relevant and logged experience in the activity at the level being offered to students
- has the relevant qualifications (including first aid and CPR)
- understands the emergency responses and supervision responsibilities.

Guidance

Rescue and resuscitation qualifications are current for twelve months.

It is recommended that Qualified Supervisors and Assistant Supervisors maintain evidence of their currency and experience through the use of a logbook, or similar.

A record of staff swimming and water safety qualifications should be maintained by the school. The date of issue of the qualification and formal notification of any subsequent renewal or upgrade should be included.

10. MINIMUM LEVELS OF SUPERVISION

The level of risk in aquatic environments is dynamic and must be constantly monitored and assessed. The appropriate number of supervisors directly monitoring students in the water must be maintained at all times.

Group sizes and supervision levels are determined by the Department Teacher-in-charge, after considering the:

- type of activity and type of sail craft to be used
- age, experience and capacity of each student
- qualifications, capacity and experience of the supervisory team
- students' medical conditions, disabilities or impairment
- location and nature of the environment.

The total number of sail boards **must not** exceed twelve (12) per Qualified Supervisor and the total number of all other sail craft **must not** exceed six (6) per Qualified Supervisor.

The following sailing to rescue craft supervision requirements apply:

- sailing craft - a minimum of one rescue craft to six (6) sailing craft
- sailboards - a minimum of one rescue craft to twelve (12) sailboards.

Safety or support power craft

A powered safety or support craft must be available for instruction and supervision at all sailing and sailboarding activities. The craft must comply with the requirements of Department of Transport *Marine*.

For all sailing and sail boarding activities there must be a maximum 24 participants per group.

Different levels of supervision are required for sailing activities in calm and open water environments, in fixed and non-fixed locations.

A second supervisor is not required for calm water - fixed locations (Years 7-12), provided that there are clear systems in place as per the risk assessment, for supervisors to quickly summon assistance if required. Greater supervision must be provided for less able students.

Students must be within the Qualified Supervisor's line of sight at all times. If the activity goes outside of line of sight, additional supervisors are required to maintain adequate supervision.

SAILING AND SAIL BOARDING

Year K-3

This activity **must not** be undertaken by students in Kindergarten - Year 3.

CALM WATER FIXED LOCATION (WITHIN 1000M OF INITIAL LAUNCHING POINT)

Year 4 - 6

Sailboarding and/or windsurfing: it is recommended that students in this environment do not exceed **100 meters** from a safe landing point at any time.

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof, and
- one supervisor for every 12 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

Calm water environments must not exceed 400m from shore at any point in time.

Recommended two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof, and
- one supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

CALM WATER NON-FIXED LOCATION (BEYOND 1000M OF INITIAL LAUNCHING POINT)

Year 4 - 6

Sailboarding and/or windsurfing: it is recommended that students in this environment do not exceed 100 meters from shore at any time.

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 18 students or part thereof, and
- one supervisor for every 12 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

Calm water environments must not exceed 400m from shore at any point in time.

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 18 students or part thereof.

OPEN WATER

Year 4-6

This activity **must not** be undertaken by students in Years 4-6.

Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- two Qualified Supervisors for every 18 students or part thereof.

The following table illustrates the minimum supervision requirements for common group sizes. Groups may be larger than those indicated here but must remain within the prescribed supervision ratios and any limits set out earlier in this document.

Activity	Year level	Environment	Number of students	Qualified Supervisor	Experienced assistant supervisor	Total supervisory team
Sailing and Sail Boarding	K - 3	All aquatic environments	Not Permitted			
	4 - 6	Calm Water: fixed location (0 - 1000m)	1 - 24	1	1	2
			25 - 36	2	1	3
		Calm Water: non-fixed locations	1 - 18	1	1	2
			19 - 24	2	0	2
		Open Water	Not Permitted			
	7 - 12	Calm Water: fixed location	1 - 24	1	0	1
		Calm Water: non-fixed locations	1 - 18	1	1	2
			19 - 36	2	0	2
		Open Water	1 - 18	1	1	2
			19 - 36	2	1	3

11. SUPERVISION STRATEGIES

Supervision strategies must:

- confirm that the safety and well-being of students is maintained at all times
- reflect risks associated with the activity
- address circumstances when students are not in clear view of the supervisors
- include students who are not actively participating in the activity.

A powered safety or support craft must be available for instruction and group control on the water.

If other schools or groups are using the same venue, potential risks must be identified, and supervisory strategies put in place to deal with the nature and number of those groups.

Guidance

It is recommended that:

- rules are established to confirm that all students remain in close proximity to the supervisors
- a buddy system is established so that students can monitor and check the safety and wellbeing of their partner
- a regular head count of all participants is conducted.

Safety or support craft

Supervisors must exercise particular caution when students are entering, boarding or near the propellers of a vessel. Propeller guards are recommended. Propeller aware strategies must be used whenever a person is in the water.

12. IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must employ systems for identifying students that may include:

- the wearing of lifesaver or swimming caps, neoprene armbands or rash shirts, school t-shirts, vests, bibs, sashes etc
- confining students to designated areas not being utilised by other schools or members of the public.

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

13. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

14. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix B: Risk Management Plan for further requirements.

15. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix C: Emergency Management Plan for further requirements.

16. BRIEFING STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that all participants are briefed about:

- the educational purpose (learning intentions) and the cooperative nature of the activity
- components of the activity (including skills required)
- standards of behaviour, including roles and responsibilities
- hazard identification and safety requirements
- buddy practices and procedures that will be followed if members of the party become lost or separated from the group
- boundaries marked for the activity
- communication signals to gain attention and request assistance
- emergency and evacuation procedures, signals and location of emergency equipment
- how to identify currents, rips, reefs and other potential hazards of the venue, including safe entry and exit points
- minimal impact principles for that location (Leave No Trace principles).

In addition to the above, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team have been briefed about the following:

- the role and location of supervisors
- maintaining supervision ratios (including of those students not involved in the activity)
- modified/adjusted activity requirements for students with a disability or impairment
- student-specific medical requirements and conditions associated with hypothermia, sunburn and dehydration
- the system for identifying students and supervisors
- the route to be followed including pre-determined stops and/or meeting points along the way (if applicable)
- communication strategies that will be used throughout the activity, including designated signals to gain the attention of the whole group, and to identify when emergency assistance is required
- location of first aid kit and emergency/rescue equipment
- appropriate clothing for the activity and weather conditions
- aspects of the environment and expected weather conditions.

Special briefing sessions must be arranged for students who were absent from preparatory briefings.

Guidance

Changing environmental conditions encountered during sailing activities may necessitate the need to brief students while in transit.

17. INFORMED CONSENT

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.



Department of
Education

APPENDIX P: SCUBA DIVING

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SCUBA DIVING

This document contains specific requirements related to SCUBA diving activities and must be read in conjunction with *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures*.

1. BACKGROUND

SCUBA diving may be pool, boat or shore-based. School SCUBA diving activities generally fall into three categories:

- introductory activities, using SCUBA equipment
- training towards a recognised SCUBA diver qualification
- as a means to collect data or research for scientific, maritime or marine studies.

Beginner or introductory courses (such as a Learn to Dive course or Open Water Diver Beginner Course) introduce students to recreational SCUBA diving in a supervised environment.

Advanced courses allow students to increase their knowledge and build on their diving skills.

Unless the supervisory team has the required qualifications and experience, it is recommended that SCUBA activities be delivered through an external provider or training organisation that complies with either the National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS) or World Recreational SCUBA Training Council (WRSTC).

DEFINITIONS

ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR

Assists the Qualified Supervisor and or Department Teacher-in-charge.

CALM WATER

A still or slow moving water environment with no to low swell, within **400 meters** from a safe landing point. These areas may include: a sheltered/ protected coastal area or river, dam, waterhole or inland water body.

DEPARTMENT TEACHER-IN-CHARGE

The member of the teaching staff employed by the Department of Education (or an Approved Provider) and is managing the school activity. For information relating to Approved Providers refer to Appendix A: General Requirements.

MERMAID LINE

A length of floating rope attached to a stationary boat or suspended float used to check the direction of the current.

OPEN WATER

An unprotected water environment that may be fast flowing or turbulent, such as a surf beach, flowing river or waterway, tidal coastal water, or areas affected by swell and or/strong currents. This also applies to calm water areas greater than **400 meters** from a safe landing point.

QUALIFIED SUPERVISOR

Has the required qualifications, skill, experience and technical knowledge to instruct the activity.

SAFETY SAUSAGE

A buoy used when the diver is at the surface to indicate the divers' position to the dive boat.

SCUBA

An acronym for *Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus*.

SCUBA DIVING

An activity where a participant swims underwater, breathing compressed gas.

2. ENVIRONMENT

Each aquatic environment is unique, and open water environments can be more hazardous.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure that research and/or a reconnaissance trip is conducted around the planned locations, well in advance to confirm sites are suitable.

The suitability of the venue is determined after considering the:

- location
- turbidity of the water
- strength of tides and currents
- water depth
- presence and power of waves
- presence and height of swell
- temperature of the water
- students' capacity, skills and experience
- planned activities
- availability of shelter from the weather
- possibility of members of the public or other school or training groups diving in the same area
- proximity to medical expertise
- venue access (for emergency services)
- supervision required.

If unsure of restrictions regarding the use of a venue for SCUBA activities, a check must be made with the Department of Transport Marine and/or other relevant authorities, such as the *Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development: Fisheries*, the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions and/or local councils.

Selected activity areas are to be appropriately defined with safety rope lines with buoys attached. In open water locations, surrounding safety barriers such as the shoreline, piers, jetties or floating ropes may be used.

A supervised out of water waiting area for participants must be clearly defined.

In open water locations, the dive site must be clearly defined by buoys or land features and an internationally recognised Code A diver flag(s). Department of Transport Dive Safe Safety Guidelines provide additional information.

Weather conditions can change rapidly and must be assessed and monitored in the days leading up to the activity, on the day of the activity and throughout the activity. The Department Teacher-in-charge may need to modify, relocate or cancel the activity at any time. Check the Bureau of Meteorology for up-to-date conditions and weather warnings.

SCUBA diving must not be conducted in known estuarine crocodile habitats.

Checks must be made directly prior to the activity regarding shark sightings or alerts in the area of use. In the event of a shark sighting the activity may need to be postponed or modified. Prior to conducting the activity, the Department Teacher-in-charge must access information regarding weather, coastal conditions and shark activity. Information is available from:

- [SharkSmart](#) website
- [Surf Life Saving WA \(SLSWA\)](#) website
- [SLSWA X \(Twitter\) feed](#)
- Beachsafe.

The activity must be cancelled immediately if a shark warning alert is sounded or becomes current.

Guidance

SCUBA sites should have:

- *safe entry and exit points with minimal water movement*
- *minimum visibility of 3.0 metres or more*
- *swell less than 2.0 metres in height (not waves) and breaking waves that are less than 0.5 metres.*
- *a depth of no more than 18 metres during final dives for diving training purposes (Advanced Open Water qualifications require dives to be completed at a depth of no more than 30 metres)*
- *stable weather and water conditions and no obvious change expected in the weather*
- *a current less than 0.5 knots*
- *no obvious dangers in the water (e.g. boat traffic, dangerous marine animals or commercial waterways). Areas surrounding cray pot lines are deemed commercial waterways and should not be dived. The Department Teacher-in-charge should continue to monitor this as cray boats not present at the start of a dive, can arrive during a dive. **Please note:** WA dive flag laws do not take precedence over a commercial activity.*

3. CAPACITY OF STUDENTS

SCUBA diving is restricted to students aged 14 years of age and older.

Snorkelling is recommended for students in Year 7 and 8, as a lead-up activity to SCUBA diving. Refer to [Appendix Q: Snorkelling](#).

Before engaging in open water dives, students must have developed the following skills and understandings:

Skills	Understandings
• Submerging and resurfacing confidently without scuba equipment • Hand signals (ok, not ok, distress etc.) • Entry and exit methods • Achieving positive buoyancy while on the surface • Mechanical and oral inflation of a Buoyancy Control Device (BCD) • Equalising pressure in ears and mask • Clearing a flooded snorkel and mask • Ditch and replace or recover a weight belt • Removal and replacement of a scuba unit while on the surface and underwater • Securing a loose BCD band on a buddy's cylinder while in the water • What to do in the case of equipment failure (self-rescue and rescue techniques, including	• Equipment • Dive planning • The importance of adhering to the buddy system • Boyle's law • Light and sound under water • Buoyancy concepts and control • How to gain and maintain appropriate buoyancy as depth underwater increases, the effects on the body and equipment change with the increasing pressure • Dangers of separating from the group • Hyperventilation • Hypothermia • Barotrauma (ear squeeze) • Dangerous marine animals

but not limited to: cramp releases, disconnecting BCD inflator, tired diver tows, alternate air use, free flowing regulator and controlled emergency ascents) • Use of and engagement in safe diving practices including buddy system procedures and comprehensive pre-dive checks	• Effects of decompression sickness and nitrogen narcosis • Dive planning to confirm safe dive calculations considering depth and time are understood • Flying after diving procedures
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Before students can move to SCUBA diving in open water environments (other than introductory SCUBA experiences), the Department Teacher-in-charge must determine whether each student has the necessary ability and understandings to participate safely.

Prior to engaging in any training activities, students (or their parents/carers, if the students are under 18 years old) must complete a valid SCUBA diving medical statement from the Undersea & Hyperbaric Medical Society (UHMC) and submit this to the dive instructor conducting the course.

If there is any doubt about a student's ability to dive due to a medically diagnosed condition (for example, asthma), the student will need to be cleared by a medical practitioner, to confirm that they are fit to continue participating in SCUBA activities.

Guidance

Students should have had at least four (4) hours SCUBA instruction in a swimming pool or other closed, clear water venue as well as completed all the required skills training to a demonstrated level of competence and confidence prior to proceeding to training dives in open, deep or flowing water locations.

Before progressing to more advanced dives, students must hold or be training for, the appropriate pre-requisite SCUBA qualification for that level of diving.

Prior to certification, participating students must be able:

- to complete a continuous swim of either:
 - 200 metres on the surface of the water using a recognised stroke, without the use of mask, fins, snorkel or flotation equipment or
 - 300 metres on the surface of the water using a mask, snorkel and fins without the use of flotation aids
- and float and/or tread water for ten minutes immediately afterwards.

Guidance

The industry standard allows a combination of strokes as long as the student does not stop during the assessment. The 300 metre snorkel swim has been included as a viable alternative as the assessment is about swimming ability for snorkelling or SCUBA diving.

The Department Teacher-in-charge and relevant supervisors must be aware of health care maintenance and/or any intensive health care needs of students, particularly allergic reactions to stings or bites in a marine environment. Protective equipment such as gloves and appropriate exposure suits should be considered for students who are susceptible.

A re-assessment of students' capacity is undertaken if any circumstances surrounding the activity change. This includes any change in the condition of the aquatic environment, their medical fitness, or the students' capacity to undertake the activity. If there is any change to a student's medical fitness, the student must submit a new dive medical statement prior to resuming training or diving.

Students must hold relevant diving certificates when diving in sites where there is no direct access to the surface (for example, when diving into shipwrecks or sites that have restricted visibility).

For advanced level courses, students must have approved entry-level SCUBA diving qualifications, plus any other prerequisites (such as a specific number of logged dives) as required by the training organisation.

Guidance

The Department's Swimming and Water Safety Continuum and the Safety Survival Sequence (refer to Swimming and Water Safety Activities document) within the Swimming Instructors Handbook and Guidelines and Royal Life Saving Swim and Survive Instructor Assessment Guide are useful resources for gauging students' swimming and water safety skills. They are only indicative of student skills at the time of assessment and their use does not guarantee students' safety, nor reduce a teacher's duty of care responsibilities.

4. STUDENT HEALTH CARE

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

5. ACTIVITIES

SCUBA activities should be part of an accredited dive training program.

The full range of activities for the proposed SCUBA diving program must be assessed by the Qualified Supervisor, in consultation with the Department Teacher-in-charge, to inform planning and selection of appropriate water-environments.

Slowly Ascend From Every dive (SAFE) diving and buddy practices are to be maintained at all times.

Prior to the dive-training activity, limits must be set on group movements, including depth restrictions and distance from the Qualified Supervisor leading the dive. Separation procedures must also be established and understood prior to all dives.

Introductory dives (in swimming pools or calm water) **must not** exceed a depth of **6 metres**.

Beginner level diving courses:

The depth of the dive location **must not** exceed **12 metres** for the first two training dives and **must not** exceed **18 metres** for the remaining dives on the course.

Advanced diving courses:

The depth of the dive location **must not** exceed **30 metres**.

All open water training dives for introductory or beginner level courses must be conducted during daylight hours only, and in water that allows direct and immediate access to the surface.

Cave or cavern diving is prohibited.

Wreck diving is prohibited during training, unless the activities are part of a recognised course for divers beyond the beginner level.

School groups **must not** engage in any diving activities that require planned decompression stages.

Students **must not** exceed three dives in any open water training day, with the third dive not exceeding **14 metres** in depth.

Students **must not** fly for at least 12 hours after a single dive. If they are engaged in repetitive, multiday dives, or if an emergency decompression stop has to be made, they **must not** fly for at least 18 hours. As physiology varies between individuals, these are minimum time requirements, longer stops prior to flying are advisable.

Dive logs and training logs must be completed after each dive and retained as per record keeping requirements.

Refer to *Appendix S: Swimming and Water Based Activities* for qualifications and supervision requirements that apply if a recreational or free swim is included after the SCUBA activity.

Minimal environmental impact principles are to be followed at all times. Divers must not collect any natural objects or relics while on their dive unless a licence has been obtained for marine study. Objects taken for this purpose are returned after examination. Marine life is not to be handled. If rocks are turned over, they are replaced as found.

6. EQUIPMENT

The Department Teacher-in-charge, in consultation with the Qualified Supervisor must confirm that all SCUBA equipment (including air cylinders:

- comply with the requirements of relevant Australian Standards
- are maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's equipment specifications (including assembly, maintenance, use of equipment and service record)
- is in operational working order and appropriate for the activity.

The Qualified Supervisor must ensure that students carry out pre-dive checks on their equipment and that of their buddy (as a double check), to confirm that it is in operational working order. The Qualified Supervisor must identify students not comfortable with the condition of the equipment, or who suspect it may be below an acceptable standard. Equipment must be inspected by a member of the supervisory team for replacement, or repair.

Qualified Supervisors and other adult supervising divers must use a dive computer and wear a knife or cutting tool.

Mouth and nosepieces must be disinfected prior to use by another person.

Each participating student requires:

- a Buoyancy Control Device (BCD) with a SCUBA feed inflation device of appropriate size
- a wet suit that fits correctly, and provides thermal protection that is appropriate to the conditions being dived
- a snorkel with sufficient air flow when wearing SCUBA equipment attached to a mask
- a mask that fully encloses the diver's nose, fitted with tempered safety glass and sealed properly to allow for equalising pressure
- a weight belt or weight system with quick release capacity that can be operated with one hand
- fins of appropriate design, fit and size for SCUBA diving
- clothing that provides exposure protection during surface intervals
- air cylinders indicating that the tank has passed a hydrostatic test within the previous 12 months, as per the Australian Standard
- a valve that meets the relevant Australian Standard, with a current test stamp
- a single-hose regulator fitted with submersible pressure gauge, depth gauge and an alternative second stage (octopus) regulator for rescue operations

- gloves, if necessary
- a submersible timing device for open dives
- emergency signalling equipment, including high visibility signalling devices (for example, safety sausage, flag) and audible signalling device
- a compass or direction monitor
- a timer (for example, waterproof watch) for dive table calculations and/or a dive computer
- a planning slate and writing tool (where necessary) to communicate and/or record dive or training information.

Guidance

Before and after SCUBA activities, students should protect themselves from sun and weather conditions by bringing (as appropriate) a towel and change of clothing including a hat, shirt, jumper, long trousers and jacket.

A broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen should be applied as per manufacturer's instructions.

Drinking water should be available at the activity, to combat dehydration.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that:

- emergency equipment is readily accessible
- appropriate first aid equipment is readily accessible and includes items that are appropriate to the activity, environment, size and needs of the party and duration of the activities. Oxygen resuscitation equipment must be included and at least one member of the supervisory team must be accredited in its administration
- an internationally recognised Code Flag A (minimum size 600 mm x 750 mm) is displayed so that it is clearly visible to all vessels operating in the vicinity.
 - For **training dives**, the flag must be displayed and buoyed by a large float to mark the dive site or displayed from a jetty or training vessel.
 - For **qualified divers**, the flag must be a minimum size of 300 mm x 200 mm and buoyed by a float if the group is swimming from the shore, or a size 6 flag if displayed from a jetty. The flag must be clearly visible to all vessels in the vicinity
- communication equipment is readily accessible
- transport is readily available in case of emergency.

Support or training vessels

The following equipment must be available on any accompanying safety or support boat when SCUBA diving:

- a visible float with a floating mermaid line
- a Code A dive flag (minimum size 600 mm x 750 mm), clearly visible to all vessels in the vicinity
- a suitably weighted descent/ascent line that is long enough to reach the bottom of the dive site, incorporating a safety stop system and datum marker
- decompression tables or an alternative means of calculating decompression requirements
- a notebook and pen
- an emergency oxygen set and approved medical kit
- a spare SCUBA unit, including a regulator, Buoyancy Control Device (BCD) and full tank
- communication equipment for emergency situations.

Where a safety or support power boat is required to accompany divers, the craft must comply with Department of Transport Marine: Recreational Boating or Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act 2012 requirements, whichever are appropriate.

Propeller guards and propeller aware strategies must be used whenever a participant is in the water.

Under **no** circumstances may students carry or use spear guns, hand spears, knives or slings.

Life jackets must adhere to the relevant Standard and be an appropriate size, maintained and serviced regularly in accordance with the manufacturer's advice. Refer to Department of Transport Marine for further information.

7. THE SUPERVISORY TEAM

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

8. EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure that when booking an external provider, they are made aware of the documentation that they need to provide, or that must be sighted.

External providers must follow all mandated requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures will be asked to supply copies of certain documentation, and/or make them available for the Department Teacher-in-charge to sight. External providers should familiarise themselves with Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix D: External Provider Checklist.

9. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team members possess skills, knowledge and experience in SCUBA diving, and have the appropriate skills, to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during SCUBA activities.

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for mandated first aid qualifications and evidence requirements for all qualifications and competencies.

Minimum qualifications and/or formal training requirements:

If the SCUBA activity is led by an external provider, the Department Teacher-in-charge must be satisfied that the external provider is appropriately qualified and competent.

The supervisory team must hold current, activity-specific qualifications and competencies, through a recognised tertiary institution, SCUBA instruction training organisation, or Registered Training Organisation including:

- be able to effect a rescue at the location
- have a current first aid qualification that is relevant to the activity and location and have current CPR accreditation
- have a qualification in the provision and administration of oxygen in an emergency situation
- have documented evidence of current and relevant SCUBA instructional qualifications or nationally recognised competencies (for example, the Australian Qualifications Framework, Outdoor Recreation Industry Training Package competencies) gained from an education institution or nationally recognised training provider, or equivalent
- be familiar with the safety regulations of the activity
- have documented evidence of SCUBA experience.

Minimum qualification requirements:

Qualified Supervisor requirements	Requires a qualification to instruct and must have at least <u>ONE</u> of the following: • nationally accredited <i>SCUBA Coach</i> Level 2 • nationally accredited <i>SCUBA Instructor</i> • nationally accredited <i>Open Water SCUBA Instructor</i> • certificate from a recognised SCUBA instruction training organisation that complies with the NCAS or WRSTC standard for SCUBA Diving coaches and instructors • an equivalent qualification, as recognised by the Director General.
Assistant Supervisor	At least <u>ONE</u> of the following: • Royal Life Saving Society Australia (RLSSA) <i>Bronze Medallion</i> (for closed water locations) • RLSSA <i>School Teacher Aquatic Rescue Training</i> (START) certificate (for closed and open water locations) • Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) <i>Bronze Medallion</i> (open water and beach locations) • SLSA <i>Surf Rescue</i> certificate • SLSWA <i>Community Surf Rescue</i> certificate. At least one of the following, where the Assistant Supervisor can demonstrate recent and relevant logged experience and current CPR: • A nationally accredited SCUBA Diving qualification • an equivalent qualification, as recognised by the Director General.

Safety or support craft

The supervisor in control of the safety or support power boat must hold one of the following:

- hold a *Recreational Skippers Ticket* (RST) and be competent in the use of the craft
- be a qualified and experienced *Safety Boat Operator*
- hold an Australian Sailing *Power Boat Handling* certificate (PBH)
- hold a relevant commercial ticket.

Skills and experience

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team:

- has recent and relevant experience at the level being offered to students
- have the capacity to manage the SCUBA activity in the proposed location
- has relevant qualifications and has participated in a minimum of six hours of SCUBA in the last six months, and 20 hours in the last two years (a logbook must be sighted)
- has the required supervisors with current CPR qualification
- understands the emergency responses and supervision responsibilities.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must be satisfied that any supervisor operating a power safety or support craft has recent logged experience in effecting a relevant support and rescue operation.

Guidance

It is recommended that supervisors maintain evidence of their currency and experience through the use of a logbook, or similar.

10. MINIMUM LEVEL OF SUPERVISION

Supervisory requirements must take into consideration the:

- age, experience and capacity of each student
- students' medical conditions, disabilities or impairments
- supervisors' qualifications and diving experience

- competence of the external provider
- type of activity to be undertaken
- nature of the environment (calm or open water location)
- location of the activity
- *Surf Life Saving WA X (Twitter) feed* of shark sightings
- weather conditions, which must be assessed and monitored in the days leading up to the activity, on the day of the activity, and throughout the activity. The supervisory team may be required to modify or cancel the activity at any time.

The level of risk in aquatic environments is dynamic and must be constantly monitored. The appropriate number of supervisors directly monitoring students in the water must be maintained at all times.

There must always be a minimum of two experienced supervisors at any SCUBA diving activity. One of these supervisors must be a Qualified Supervisor who remains with the students during the dive.

At any time, supervisory levels may need to be increased.

Supervisors in excess of the minimum supervisory requirements and who are out of the water (for example, supervisory staff in the boat) do not require SCUBA diving qualifications, but must have the appropriate swimming, lifesaving and CPR accreditation and be prepared to assist in an emergency.

The following supervisor to student requirements are a minimum and must form part of the risk assessment. The Department Teacher-in-charge must conduct a risk assessment of the environment and desired activity to confirm adequate supervision levels can be maintained.

INTRODUCTORY OR BEGINNER PROGRAMS SWIMMING POOL

Year 9 - 12

There must be at least two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every eight students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every four students or part thereof.

CALM WATER AND OPEN WATER

Year 9 - 12

There must be at least two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every four students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every four students or part thereof.

SCUBA COURSES AND ADVANCED DIVER ACTIVITIES ALL WATER ENVIRONMENTS

Year 10 - 12

There must be at least two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every eight students or part thereof and
- one supervisor for every four students or part thereof.

The following illustrates the minimum supervision requirements for maximum group sizes.

Activity	Year Level	Environment	Number of Students	Qualified Supervisor	Assistant Supervisor	Total Supervisory team
Beginner or Introductory courses	9 - 12	Swimming Pool	1 - 8	1	1	2
		Calm Water and Open Water	1 - 4	1	1	2
Advanced SCUBA activities/ courses	10 - 12	All Water Bodies	1 - 8	1	1	2
Maximum group sizes are contained in this table. Additional students can be accommodated with the formation of a new group. Students must be aged 14 years and over.						

11. SUPERVISION STRATEGIES

Supervision strategies must:

- confirm that the safety and well-being of students is maintained at all times
- reflect risks associated with the activity
- address circumstances when students are not in clear view of the supervisors
- include students who are not actively participating in the activity.

Records must be kept recording student achievement of prerequisite skills.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must have access to the contact details for emergency services:

- Call 000 in an emergency.
- Be aware of the nearest compression chamber or hyperbaric unit:
- If not an emergency and in the Perth region - contact Fiona Stanley Hospital on (08) 6152 5222 (Monday to Friday between 8.00am and 4.00pm) or (08) 6152 2222 (after hours).
- If outside the Perth region or anywhere within Australia contact the Diver Emergency Service on 1800 088 200.

The appropriate number of supervisors directly monitoring students in the water must be maintained at all times. A lookout must be posted on each dive.

When students are diving from a vessel, a supervisor remains on board to keep watch and manage the operation (for example, all dive charter vessels must have qualified diver supervisors on duty).

Buddy practices are maintained at all times.

Safety or support craft

- A safety tether lanyard must be worn by the power boat driver at all times.
- Supervisors must exercise particular caution when students are entering, boarding and/or snorkelling near the propeller of a vessel.
- Propeller guards and propeller aware strategies must be used whenever a participant is in the water.

Guidance**Safety check systems**

Consideration is given to positioning, scanning and safety check systems (see Swimming and Water Based Activities).

A head count of student and supervisor numbers is conducted immediately on return to the beach, boat or diving platform.

12. IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

13. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

14. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix B: Risk Management Plan for further requirements.

15. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix C: Emergency Management Plan for further requirements.

16. BRIEFING STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that all participants are briefed about:

- the educational purpose (learning intentions) and the cooperative nature of the activity
- components of the activity (including skills required)
- standards of behaviour, including roles and responsibilities
- hazard identification and safety requirements
- buddy practices and procedures that will be followed if members of the party become lost or separated from the group
- boundaries marked for the activity
- communication signals to gain attention and request assistance
- emergency and evacuation procedures, signals and location of emergency equipment
- how to identify currents, rips, reefs and other potential hazards of the venue, including safe entry and exit points
- minimal impact principles for that location (Leave No Trace principles).

In addition to the above, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team have been briefed about the following:

- the role and location of supervisors
- maintaining supervision ratios (including of those students not involved in the activity)
- modified/adjusted activity requirements for students with a disability or impairment
- the system for identifying students and supervisors
- the route to be followed including pre-determined stops and/or meeting points along the way (if applicable)
- student-specific medical requirements and conditions associated with hypothermia, sunburn and dehydration
- communication strategies that will be used throughout the activity, including designated signals to gain the attention of the whole group, and to identify when emergency assistance is required
- location of first aid kit and emergency/rescue equipment
- appropriate clothing for the activity and weather conditions
- aspects of the environment and expected weather conditions.

Special information sessions must be arranged for students who were absent from preparatory briefings.

Guidance

After the SCUBA diving activity, all participants should participate in a post dive debrief (check for ear discomfort, headaches, breathing problems, depth times and air rescue limits).

17. INFORMED CONSENT

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.



**Department of
Education**

APPENDIX Q: SNORKELLING

EFFECTIVE: 21 JULY 2025

VERSION: 3.1

SNORKELLING

This document contains specific requirements related to snorkelling activities and must be read in conjunction with *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures*.

1. BACKGROUND

Snorkelling is an activity in which students use a mask, snorkel and swimming aids (for example fins) when swimming in calm and open water locations. SCUBA or other breathing apparatus (including SNUBA apparatus) are not to be used.

Snorkelling does not include activities in swimming instruction programs where masks and snorkels are used as a teaching aid or incidentally as part of the swimming program. Refer to *Swimming and Water Based Activities* for further information, qualifications and supervision requirements that apply.

Guidance

The word "SNUBA" is a portmanteau of "snorkel" and "SCUBA". The swimmer uses swim fins, a diving mask, weights, and diving regulator as in SCUBA diving. For that reason, it supplies air under pressure which means barotraumas and decompression sickness become a factor. For this activity, the mandated requirements in Appendix P: SCUBA Diving, would apply.

DEFINITIONS

ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR

Assists the Qualified Supervisor and or Department Teacher-in-charge and must have relevant qualifications and experience.

CALM WATER

A still or slow-moving water environment with no to low swell, within **400 meters** from a safe landing point. These areas may include a sheltered/ protected coastal area or river, dam, waterhole or inland water body.

DEPARTMENT TEACHER-IN-CHARGE

A member of the teaching staff employed by the Department of Education (or an Approved Provider) and managing the school activity. For information relating to Approved Providers refer to Appendix A: General Requirements.

FIXED LOCATION

Within **50 metres** of the initial entry point.

NON-FIXED LOCATION

Any area beyond **50 metres** from the initial entry point.

OPEN WATER

An unprotected water environment that may be fast flowing or turbulent, such as a surf beach, flowing river or waterway, tidal coastal water, or areas affected by swell and or/strong currents. This also applies to calm water areas greater than **400 meters** from a safe landing point.

QUALIFIED SUPERVISOR

Has the required qualifications, skill, experience and technical knowledge to instruct the activity.

SAFE LANDING POINT

Where a person can safely enter and/or exit the water unassisted. This excludes areas unsuitable for landing that may include but are not limited to: vertical cliffs, low lying reefs, or areas affected by rebounding waves.

SNORKELLING

Swimming through a body of water usually wearing flippers, a diving mask, and using a shaped breathing tube called a snorkel.

2. ENVIRONMENT

Each aquatic environment is unique, and open water environments can be more hazardous.

The Qualified Supervisor must have first-hand knowledge about the venue, weather conditions, tides and currents at that venue (see Appendix A: General Requirements).

The Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure that research and/or a reconnaissance trip is conducted around the planned locations, well in advance to confirm sites are suitable.

The Department Teacher-in-charge confirms the suitability of the venue after considering the:

- location
- turbidity of the body of water and strength of tides and currents
- water depth and temperature
- presence, power and height of waves and swell
- students' capacity, skills and experience
- planned activities
- availability of shelter from the weather
- possibility of members of the public or other groups in the same area
- high tide changes that affect entry and exit
- supervision required.

Selected activity areas are to be appropriately defined. In open and calm water locations, surrounding safety barriers such as the shoreline, piers, jetties or floating ropes may be used.

An out of water waiting area must be clearly defined where students must be supervised at all times.

Prevailing water and surf conditions in the selected area must be reappraised for suitability before students enter the water.

Weather conditions can change rapidly and must be assessed and monitored in the days leading up to the activity, on the day of the activity and throughout the activity. In particular, any swells or rips should be noted, and students instructed on how to safely negotiate out of a rip. The supervisory team may need to modify, relocate or cancel the activity at any time. Check the Bureau of Meteorology for up-to-date conditions and weather warnings.

Snorkelling programs are not to be conducted if the water temperature is low and/or there is a risk of hypothermia.

Snorkelling activities must not be conducted in strong tidal areas, on a lee-shore where there is no safe exit point (for example, where there is wind blowing on-shore in rocky areas), where a river is in flood, or in known estuarine crocodile habitats. Further information is available from The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions or Be Crocwise.

Checks must be made directly prior to the activity regarding shark sightings or alerts in the area of use. In the event of a shark sighting the activity may need to be postponed or

modified. Prior to conducting the activity, the Department Teacher-in-charge must access information regarding coastal conditions and shark activity. Information is available from:

- [SharkSmart](#) website
- [Surf Life Saving WA \(SLSWA\)](#) website
- [SLSWA X \(Twitter feed\)](#)
- Beachsafe.

The activity must be cancelled immediately if a shark warning alert is sounded or becomes current.

Snorkelling sites must have:

- a minimum visibility of at least 3.0 metres under water, with the bottom visible from the surface
- safe entry and exit points
- swell (unbroken waves) that are less than 2.0 metres (supervisors must be aware of the occurrence of rogue waves, of up to twice the height of current swell and approximately 1 in every 7 waves will be higher than the average swell conditions on any given day)
- shore breaking waves that are less than 0.5 metres. The Department Teacher-in-charge must assess the conditions, as swell and waves can become more hazardous when the duration and intensity changes, or if the forecast is for increasing conditions
- minimal water movement (a calm water surface with minimal or no 'chop' on the water)
- stable weather and water conditions and no obvious change expected in the weather
- a depth of no more than 8 metres for snorkel diving training purposes
- no obvious dangers such as boat traffic, fisherman or fishing boats near the snorkel diving area (fishing boats often have larger fish following).

Guidance

The length of shoreline used for supervising snorkelling activities should not exceed 100 metres. Particular care should be taken in areas where there are strong currents. Care should also be taken with rips or high tidal areas, especially in the northwest of the state.

For more information regarding weather:

- [Bureau of Meteorology](#)
- [Weatherzone](#)
- [Seabreeze](#)
- [Swellnet](#).

3. CAPACITY OF STUDENTS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that each student has the required capacity and maturity to implement safety requirements. Students must have the appropriate swimming and water safety skills and understandings to participate safely.

In open water environments, it is recommended that students taking part in snorkelling activities are at least 12 years of age. Snorkelling from a boat is not recommended for students under 14 years of age.

Students with a disability or impairment, or who have had limited exposure to water-based activities, may participate in snorkelling activities provided adequate safety, control and modification measures are implemented. Specific consideration is given to:

- the impact of the student's ability to safely participate in the activity
- location and access
- supervision levels
- suitable flotation devices
- providing curriculum adjustments so the student can access the activity on the same basis as their peers.

Students who have a medically diagnosed condition that may impact their safety must be cleared by a medical practitioner before they can participate.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must be aware of health care maintenance and/or any intensive health care needs of students, particularly allergic reactions to stings or bites in a marine environment. Protective equipment such as gloves and appropriate exposure suits should be considered for students who are susceptible.

A re-assessment of the capacity of each student is undertaken if any circumstances surrounding the activity change. This includes any change in the condition of the aquatic environment, their medical fitness, or their capacity to undertake the activity.

Before snorkelling to any depth, students must have developed the following skills and understandings:

Skills	Understandings
• Submerging and resurfacing confidently without snorkelling equipment • Hand signals (ok, not ok, distress signals, etc.) • Entry and exit methods • Equalising pressure in ears and mask air space • Cleaning and replacing the face mask • Clearing a flooded snorkel and mask • Using a flooded mask or no mask • Surface diving techniques, including equalising the pressure in ears when descending • Correct finning technique • Duck diving • What to do in the case of equipment failure (self-rescue and rescue techniques) • What to do in the case of cramp and assisting another diver (self-rescue and rescue techniques)	• Equipment • Snorkel planning • The importance of adhering to the buddy system (where one dives and the other one stays on the surface - one up, one down) • Boyles law which applies to equalising air spaces and compression affecting buoyancy • The properties of light and sound under water • Buoyancy concepts and control • Dangers of separating from the group • Hyperventilation • Hypothermia • Barotrauma squeeze (middle ear squeeze) • Dangerous marine animals

Guidance

The Department's Swimming and Water Safety Continuum and the Safety Survival Sequence (refer to Swimming and Water Safety Activities document) within the Swimming Instructors Handbook and Guidelines and Royal Life Saving Swim and Survive Instructor Assessment Guide are useful resources for gauging students' swimming and water safety skills. They are only indicative of student skills at the time of assessment and their use does not guarantee students' safety, nor reduce a teacher's duty of care responsibilities.

Prior to engaging in snorkelling activities, students should be able to:

- submerge and resurface safely
- demonstrate survival sculling, floating and treading water
- swim 200 metres in less than seven (7) minutes
- support themselves in water for a minimum of fifteen (15) minutes without the aid of a flotation device.

For open water snorkelling, (in addition to being able to demonstrate the skills listed above) students should have logged at least four hours in calm water before advancing to open water.

Students with asthma should have spare medication for emergency treatment as close as practicable, so that if an inhaler is lost in the water, a spare is immediately available.

4. STUDENT HEALTH CARE

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

5. ACTIVITIES

Activities include **snorkel swimming** (snorkelling on the surface of the water, using snorkelling apparatus) or **snorkel diving** (breath holding while diving and swimming below the surface of the water).

The full range of activities for the proposed snorkelling program must be assessed to inform planning and selection of appropriate water-environments.

On the day of the activity, the supervisory team must assess conditions at the site as being suitable for participating students.

Prior to the activity, limits must be set on group movements, including depth restrictions and distance from the Qualified Supervisor leading the activity. Separation procedures must also be established and understood.

The Department Teacher-in-charge, in consultation with the Qualified Supervisor must ensure that:

- a warm up session is conducted
- initial instruction is conducted in shallow water
- appropriately timed rest stops and food/water breaks are planned
- buddy practices are maintained at all times.

Free diving activities are prohibited.

Students must be deemed competent snorkelling from the shore, before attempting a snorkel dive from a boat.

In open water snorkel diving must remain within 200 metres of a safe landing point, or within 100 metres of a support craft (if one is used).

Dive areas are clearly defined and surrounded by safety barriers such as the shoreline, jetties, floating ropes or piers. An international Code Flag A (minimum size 600mm x 750mm attached to a large float) must be used to mark the dive site if it is where boats may be encountered or where participants are swimming more than 50 metres from the shore.

Recreational or free swims

Refer to *Swimming and Water Based Activities* for information, qualifications and supervision requirements that apply if a recreational 'free' swim or similar activity is proposed before, during or after a snorkelling program.

Guidance

Swimming in a pool using a snorkel, mask and fins may be regarded as an extension activity for a school swimming program. Where this occurs, the Swimming and Water Based Activities supporting document applies. There should be no intention of progressing this activity into snorkelling as an adventure activity.

*Minimal environmental impact principles are followed at all times. Snorkel divers should **not** collect natural objects or relics while on a dive unless a licence has been obtained for marine study purposes. Objects taken for this purpose are returned after examination. Marine life may be picked up (if safe to do so) but must be returned to the same spot. If rocks are turned over, they are replaced as found.*

Supervisors should use a logbook, to record evidence of experience. after each dive.

6. EQUIPMENT

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that equipment to be used conforms to the relevant Australian Standard, is appropriate to the activity, safe and in good working order.

The Qualified Supervisor must confirm that students have correctly fitted equipment. Appropriate wetsuits that fit correctly should be worn if the temperature of the water warrants such protection. Rash vest and thermal rash vests are also recommended.

Students should, where practical, use their own face masks, fins and snorkels for safety, hygiene and comfort. If equipment is shared, it must be thoroughly disinfected prior to use by another person.

The Qualified Supervisor must ensure that students carry out supervised pre-snorkel checks.

Emergency equipment must be readily accessible. Following assessment of the site and availability of rescue equipment, the Department Teacher-in-charge should determine whether additional non-contact rescue devices for reaching and throwing are necessary (for example, poles, pole with looped rope, inflated tube, ropes, float, flotation aids and surfboards). Students should be familiar with using clothing and human chain reach rescue strategies.

Supervisors should carry a whistle to gain the attention of the whole group. Emergency whistle procedures should be practiced and understood by the group.

The following equipment is required for the whole group:

- appropriate first aid equipment must be readily accessible and include items that are appropriate to the activity, environment, size and needs of the group and duration of the activity. At least one member of the supervisory team must be current and accredited in administering CPR, first aid and be able to affect a rescue at the chosen site
- an international Code Flag A (minimum size 600 mm x 750 mm attached to a large float) must be used to mark the dive site if it is where boats may be encountered or where participants are swimming more than 50 metres from the shore
- one piece of rescue equipment should be carried by members of the supervisory team for every 12 students
- transport must be readily available in case of emergency.

In case of emergency, appropriate communication equipment must be readily available. Mobile phones must be available for use in an emergency situation (with allowance made for the fact that they do not operate in all localities). Where there is no mobile phone coverage, MHz, MF/HF or VHF radios should be used (27- MHz radios are being phased out and will no longer be compliant from 1 September 2028). A satellite phone is an alternative option. Where a safety or support power boat is required, the craft must comply with Department of Transport Marine requirements.

Propeller guards and propeller aware strategies must be used whenever a participant is in the water.

Supervisors must ensure that students must be positively buoyant at all times, until they are in Years 11 and 12 (see Guidance).

Under **no** circumstances will students carry or use spear guns, hand spears, knives or slings.

Guidance

For further information, refer to Australian Adventure Activity Good Practice Guide: Snorkelling

The equipment recommended for each participating student comprises of:

- *an appropriate wet/dry suit that fits correctly, including boots and gloves*
- *a mask fitted with tempered glass and finger holes for equalising pressure. The mask should enclose the nose (nose pocket) and seal correctly*
- *a suitable snorkel with safety colour top should be attached or attachable (usually the left-hand side) to the mask and in excellent condition*
- *fins (flippers) that are correctly fitted and suit the conditions.*

Older students (Year 11 and 12), with the correct lead up skills may use a weight belt fitted with a quick-release buckle (when snorkel diving). Each student's weight belt should be less than the weight required to achieve neutral buoyancy so that the students remain positively buoyant.

Students should bring additional clothing to protect them from the sun/wind/cold before snorkelling, and as soon as they leave the water, as appropriate for the location and weather (for example, a towel, jumper, long trousers, hat, and jacket). Students who own sunglasses should be encouraged to bring and wear them when required.

Younger students should use a small-bore diameter snorkel.

Students may wear a buoyancy compensator or positive buoyancy aid.

A broad spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen should be applied as per manufacturer's specifications.

Drinking water should be available at all times.

7. THE SUPERVISORY TEAM

Refer to [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) for further requirements.

8. EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure that when booking an external provider, they are made aware of the documentation that they need to provide, or that must be sighted.

External providers must follow all mandated requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures will be asked to supply copies of certain documentation, and/or make them available for the Department Teacher-in-charge to sight. External providers should familiarise themselves with [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) and [Appendix D: External Provider Checklist](#).

9. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES

Refer to [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) for mandated:

- first aid qualifications
- evidence requirements for all qualifications and competencies.

Minimum qualifications and/or formal training requirements

Different qualifications are required for snorkelling activities conducted in swimming pools, calm water and open water environments.

In all water environments, the supervisory team must:

- have a current aquatic rescue qualification that is appropriate for snorkelling activities at the proposed location and the physical attributes required be able to affect such a rescue
- be able to perform first aid (hold a current first aid qualification, including the aquatic rescue, that is relevant to the activity and location)
- have documented evidence of recent and relevant snorkelling experience.

In open water environments the supervisory team must have the instructional qualifications or nationally recognised competencies gained from an education institution or nationally recognised training provider, or equivalent.

All supervisors must as a minimum, be able to swim twice the length of the area they are supervising. Supervisors must also have knowledge and an understanding of snorkelling and snorkel diving related injuries (for example, pressure injuries, carbon dioxide excess, cold temperature effects, hyperventilation, salt water aspiration syndrome, shallow water blackout).

Skills and experience

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team:

- has recent and relevant documented experience in the activity at the level being offered to students
- have the capacity to manage the snorkelling activity in the proposed location
- has the required aquatic rescue qualification, including first aid and CPR
- understands the emergency responses and supervision responsibilities.

Guidance

Records of qualifications

A record of staff swimming and water safety qualifications should be maintained by the school. The date of issue of the qualification and formal notification of any subsequent renewal or upgrade should be included.

Safety or support craft

The supervisor in control of the safety or support power boat must be competent in the use of the craft and hold one of the following:

- a Recreational Skippers Ticket (RST)
- *Safety Boat Operator*
- Australian Sailing Power Boat Handling certificate (PBH)
- a relevant commercial ticket.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must be satisfied that any supervisor operating a safety or support craft has recent logged experience in effecting a relevant support and rescue operation.

Guidance

It is recommended that supervisors maintain evidence of their currency and experience through the use of a logbook, or similar.

Where a safety or support craft is required to accompany participants, the craft must comply with Department of Transport Marine: Recreational Boating or Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act 2012 requirements.

Minimum qualification requirements:

Qualified Supervisors	
SWIMMING POOLS AND CALM WATER	Qualified Supervisors must have relevant snorkelling experience with current knowledge of the location to be used and at least one of the following: • <i>Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) Surf Rescue</i> certificate • <i>SLSWA Community Based Surf Rescue</i> certificate • <i>RLSSA Bronze Medallion</i> or <i>START</i> certificate • <i>RLSSA Pool Lifeguard</i> certificate (swimming pools only) • <i>SLSA Bronze Medallion</i> • an equivalent qualification, as recognised by the Director General.

OPEN WATER	Qualified Supervisors must have recent and relevant snorkelling experience with current knowledge of the location to be used and at least one of the following: • Have nationally recognised set of competencies gained from a nationally recognised training provider in: ◦ <i>Guide snorkelling</i> or ◦ <i>Instruct snorkelling skills</i> • a nationally accredited <i>SCUBA Coach/Instructor</i> award • <i>Dive Controller, Assistant Instructor</i> certificate or higher • nationally accredited <i>SCUBA Coach/Instructor</i> award • <i>Open Water dive certificate</i> • <i>Certificate III in Sport and Recreation or Outdoor Leadership</i> with specialisation in appropriate activities such as: ◦ <i>Demonstrate snorkelling activities</i> ◦ <i>Guide snorkelling</i> ◦ <i>Instruct snorkelling skills</i> • an equivalent qualification, as recognised by the Director General. PLUS one of the following: • <i>Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) Surf Rescue</i> certificate • <i>SLSWA Community Based Surf Rescue</i> certificate • <i>RLSSA START</i> certificate • <i>SLSA Bronze Medallion</i> • an equivalent qualification, as recognised by the Director General.
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Assistant Supervisor	
ALL WATERS	Assistant Supervisors must have at least <u>ONE</u> of the following: • <i>RLSSA Bronze Medallion</i> or <i>START certificate</i> • <i>RLSSA Pool Lifeguard</i> certificate (swimming pools only) • <i>SLSA Bronze Medallion</i> • <i>SLSA Surf Rescue</i> certificate • <i>SLSWA Community Based Surf Rescue</i> certificate At least one of the following, where the Assistant Supervisor can demonstrate recent and relevant logged experience and current CPR: • A nationally accredited <i>SCUBA Diving</i> qualification • an equivalent qualification, as recognised by the Director General.

10. MINIMUM LEVELS OF SUPERVISION

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team members possess skills in the activity and have the recent and relevant experience to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during snorkelling activities.

Supervisory requirements must take into consideration the:

- age, experience and capacity of each student
- students' medical conditions, disability or impairment
- supervisors' qualifications and experience
- competence of the external provider (if applicable)
- types of activity to be undertaken
- nature of the environment (for example, calm or open water location)
- location of the activity
- *Surf Life Saving WA (SLSA) X (Twitter) feed* of shark sightings
- weather conditions, which must be assessed and monitored in the days leading up to the activity, on the day of the activity, and throughout the activity. The supervisory team may need to modify or cancel the activity at any time.

The level of risk in aquatic environments is dynamic and must be constantly monitored. The appropriate number of supervisors directly monitoring students in the water must be maintained at all times.

Students must be within the Qualified Supervisor's line of sight at all times. If the activity goes outside of line of sight, additional supervisors are required to maintain adequate supervision.

The maximum number of students in the water at one time is based on an assessment of the water and weather conditions, and the impact of these conditions on effective supervision. If there are not enough qualified staff to supervise the number of students who are snorkelling, students will need to be rotated in and out of the water so that safe supervisory requirements can be maintained. All students not directly involved in snorkelling activities must be appropriately supervised.

When using buddy systems students should be appropriately briefed and must maintain a rigorous lookout role for their designated buddy in the water.

The minimum level of supervision is dependent on the number of participants in the water and the aquatic environment in which the activity takes place.

SWIMMING POOL – SUPERVISOR ON POOL DECK

Kindergarten - Year 3

This activity must not be undertaken by students in Kindergarten - Year 3.

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof and
- one Assistant Supervisor for every 12 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

It is recommended that there are two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 32 students or part thereof.

SWIMMING POOL - SUPERVISOR IN THE WATER

Kindergarten - Year 3

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof and
- one Assistant Supervisor for every six students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof and
- one Assistant Supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

It is recommended that there are two supervisors at all times for Snorkelling activities:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 22 students or part thereof.

CALM WATER

Kindergarten - Year 3

This activity must not be undertaken by students in Kindergarten - Year 3.

Year 4 - 6

This activity is only to be conducted in a fixed location with clearly defined boundaries over no greater distance than 50 metres from the initial entry point.

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof and
- one Assistant Supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- One Qualified Supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof.

OPEN WATER

Kindergarten - Year 3

This activity must not be undertaken by students in Kindergarten - Year 3.

Year 4 - 6

This activity must not be undertaken by students in Year 4 - 6.

Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- One Qualified Supervisor for every 12 students or part thereof.

The following table illustrates the minimum supervision requirements for common group sizes. Groups may be larger than those indicated here but must remain within the prescribed supervision ratios and any limits set out earlier in this document.

<i>Year level</i>	<i>Environment</i>	<i>Number of students</i>	<i>Qualified Supervisor</i>	<i>Assistant Supervisor</i>	<i>Total supervisory team</i>
K - 3	Swimming pool: On pool deck	Not permitted			
	Swimming pool: Supervisor in the water	1 - 6	1	1	2
		7 - 12	1	1	2
		13 - 18	1	2	3
		19 - 24	1	3	4
	Calm water	Not permitted			
4 - 6	Open water	Not permitted			
	Swimming pool: On pool deck	1 - 24	1	1	2
		25 - 36	2	1	3
	Swimming pool: In the water	1 - 16	1	1	2
		17 - 24	1	2	3
		25 - 32	2	2	4
		1 - 16	1	1	2
	Calm Water	17 - 24	2	1	3
		25 - 32	2	2	4
	Open Water	Not permitted			
7 - 12	Swimming pool: On pool deck	1 - 32	1	0	1
	Swimming pool: In the water	1 - 22	1	0	1
	Calm Water	1 - 16	1	1	2
		17 - 32	2	0	2
	Open Water	1 - 12	1	1	2
		13 - 24	2	0	2

11. SUPERVISION STRATEGIES

Supervision strategies must:

- confirm that the safety and well-being of students is maintained at all times
- reflect risks associated with the activity
- address circumstances when students are not in clear view of the supervisors
- include students who are not actively participating in the activity.

The appropriate number of supervisors directly monitoring the students in the water must be maintained at all times. It is recommended that when a second supervisor is out of the water, they are placed on an elevated feature such as a pool side, vessel, groyne, pontoon, dive platform or jetty.

Buddy practices are maintained at all times using a one up/one down technique, so that students can monitor and check the safety and wellbeing of their partner (where there are uneven numbers of students, groups of three buddies may be set up).

A head count must be conducted of students and supervisors prior to and immediately upon return to the boat, diving platform or shore.

Supervisors must continually assess the threat of marine craft.

Safety or support craft

- A tether lanyard must be worn by the power boat driver at all times.
- Supervisors must exercise particular caution when students are entering, boarding or near the propellers of a vessel. A propeller guard must be used.
- Propeller-aware strategies must be used whenever participants are in the water.

If other schools or groups are using the same venue, potential risks must be identified, and supervisory strategies put in place to deal with the nature and number of those groups, and any risks that might arise from that situation.

Guidance

For further information, refer to Australian Adventure Activity Good Practice Guide: Snorkelling. Consideration should be given to position, scanning and safety check systems (see Swimming and Water Based Activities).

It is recommended that a head count is continually performed during the activity.

12. IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Students and supervisors must be easily identifiable. A system of identification is determined after assessing the aquatic environment, students' swimming and water safety skills, the type of activities to be undertaken, and the number of students. Staff and students should wear a highly visible rash vest or easily identifiable item.

Supervisors should make themselves clearly identifiable by wearing an alternative colour rash vest in the water.

Guidance

Systems for identifying students may include:

- *confining students to designated areas not being utilised by other schools or the public*
- *the wearing of rash vests, standardised high-visibility lycra vests or shirts, "life saver" or swimming caps, or neoprene armbands.*

13. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

14. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix B: Risk Management Plan for further requirements.

15. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix C: Emergency Management Plan for further requirements.

16. BRIEFING STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that all participants are briefed about:

- the educational purpose (learning intentions) and the cooperative nature of the activity
- components of the activity (including skills required)
- standards of behaviour, including roles and responsibilities
- hazard identification and safety requirements
- buddy practices and procedures that will be followed if members of the party become lost or separated from the group
- boundaries marked for the activity
- communication signals to gain attention and request assistance
- emergency and evacuation procedures, signals and location of emergency equipment
- how to identify currents, rips, reefs and other potential hazards of the venue, including safe entry and exit points
- minimal impact principles for that location (see Leave No Trace principles).

In addition to the above, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team have been briefed about the following:

- the role and location of supervisors
- maintaining supervision ratios (including of those students not involved in the activity)
- modified/adjusted activity requirements for students with a disability or impairment
- the system for identifying students and supervisors
- the route to be followed including pre-determined stops and/or meeting points along the way (if applicable)
- student-specific medical requirements
- conditions associated with hypothermia, sunburn and dehydration
- communication strategies that will be used throughout the activity, including designated signals to gain the attention of the whole group, and to identify when emergency assistance is required
- location of first aid kit and emergency/rescue equipment
- appropriate clothing for the activity and weather conditions, including thermal and sun protection
- aspects of the environment and expected weather conditions.

Special information sessions must be arranged for students who were absent from the pre-snorkel briefing.

Changing environmental conditions encountered during snorkelling activities may necessitate the need to brief students during the activity.

17. INFORMED CONSENT

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.



**Department of
Education**

APPENDIX R: SURF RIDING

EFFECTIVE: 21 JULY 2025

VERSION: 3.1

SURF RIDING

This document contains specific requirements related to surf riding activities and must be read in conjunction with *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures*.

1. BACKGROUND

This document contains specific reference to surf riding (also referred to as surfing). Activities include riding waves on either a surf or body board.

Teachers who plan to conduct paddling activities in surf environments (for example, surf ski riding and stand-up paddle boarding) must refer to Appendix L: Paddling for activity-specific mandated requirements.

If a recreational or “free” swimming activity is included in a surf-riding program refer to Appendix S: Swimming and Water Based Activities for activity-specific mandated requirements.

DEFINITIONS

ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR

Assists the Qualified Supervisor and or Department Teacher-in-charge. Must have recent and relevant experience in the activity, at the level being offered to the students.

BODY BOARDING

The activity of riding waves towards the shore whilst lying prone on a body board.

CALM WATER

A still or slow-moving water environment with no to low swell, within **400 meters** of a safe landing point. These areas may include a sheltered/ protected coastal area or river, dam, waterhole or inland water body.

DEPARTMENT TEACHER-IN-CHARGE

A member of the teaching staff employed by the Department of Education (or an Approved Provider) and managing the school activity. For information relating to Approved Providers refer to Appendix A: General Requirements.

LOW SWELL

Shore breaking waves that are on average less than 0.5meters and have a times wave gap of greater than 8 seconds.

OPEN WATER

An unprotected water environment that may be fast flowing or turbulent, such as a surf beach, flowing river or waterway, tidal coastal water, or areas affected by swell and or/strong currents. This also applies to calm water areas greater than **400 meters** from a safe landing point.

SHORE

An area of land adjacent to the water. These areas may include low lying land, a beach, wharf, jetty or similar rigid structure attached to land.

QUALIFIED SUPERVISOR

Has the required qualifications, skill, experience and technical knowledge to instruct the activity.

SURF

The mass/or line of foam created by swell and the breaking of waves against the shore.

SURF RIDING (SURFING)

The activity of riding waves towards the shore whilst standing or lying on a surfboard.

2. ENVIRONMENT

Each aquatic environment is unique, and surf environments can be more hazardous. The effects of weather, currents, wind, waves, tide and land formations are less predictable and therefore must be continuously monitored.

The Qualified Supervisor must have first-hand knowledge about the venue, weather conditions, tides and currents at that venue (see Appendix A: General Requirements).

The Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure that research and/or a reconnaissance trip is conducted around the planned locations, well in advance to confirm sites are suitable.

The Department Teacher-in-charge confirms the suitability of the venue after considering the:

- location
- strength of tides, currents and presence of rips
- water depth and temperature
- presence, power and height of waves and swell
- students' capacity, skills and experience
- availability of shelter from the weather
- possibility of members of the public or other groups in the same area
- high tide changes that affect entry and exit
- supervision required.

When assessing the suitability of a location, access to resources, services and facilities need to be also considered (for example, toilets, water, external communication and assistance).

The Qualified Supervisor must clearly define the activity area to the supervisory team and students prior to entering the water.

An out of water waiting area must be clearly defined where students are supervised at all times.

Weather conditions can change rapidly and must be assessed and monitored in the days leading up to the activity, on the day of the activity and throughout the activity. In particular, any swells or rips should be noted, and students instructed on how to safely negotiate out of a rip if necessary. The supervisory team may need to modify, relocate or cancel the activity at any time. Check the Bureau of Meteorology for up-to-date conditions and weather warnings.

Supervisors must be aware that forecasted wave heights describe the average height of the highest third of the expected wave. It is estimated that one in every seven waves will be higher than forecast (rogue waves) and that there is potential to experience king waves of twice the forecasted height or greater.

Water depth must be appropriate for the activity.

Checks must be made directly prior to the activity regarding shark sightings or alerts in the location of use. In the event of a shark sighting the activity may need to be postponed or

modified. Prior to conducting the activity, the Department Teacher-in-charge must access information regarding coastal conditions and shark activity. Information is available from:

- SharkSmart website
- Surf Life Saving WA (SLSWA) website
- SLSWA X (Twitter feed)
- Beachsafe.

The activity must be cancelled immediately, and students/staff removed from the water if a shark warning alert is sounded or becomes current.

In the north of WA these checks must also extend to Estuarine Crocodiles. Further information is available from The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions or Be Crocwise.

If the beach has been closed or if conditions are deemed to be unsuitable by the beach lifeguards, the activity must be cancelled.

Any beach selected must have emergency vehicle access.

The activity area **must not** exceed **100 metres** along the shore and must be clearly defined by markers on the beach, or identifiable natural features. These areas should be determined in consultation with beach control authorities.

Surf-riding activities **must not** operate in designated swimming areas (between the red and yellow flags).

The following types of surf are appropriate for students' various levels of skills:

- Beginner and Intermediate: spilling waves, broken waves, small unbroken, and beach breaks.
- Advanced: larger spilling and plunging waves, reef breaks. These carry additional risk.

Guidance

Potential dangers in aquatic environments may include hypoxic blackout (shallow water blackout), immersion in deep water, impact injuries from dumping waves, or from diving into shallow water, cuts and abrasions from rocks or snags, sunburn, hypothermia, marine stings, objects in water acting as strainers and the presence of marine craft.

For more information regarding weather and wave height:

- Bureau of Meteorology
- Weatherzone
- Seabreeze
- Swellnet.

3. CAPACITY OF STUDENTS

Prior to commencing any surfing activity, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that each student has the capacity and required swimming and water safety skills to participate safely.

Specific strategies and support must be put in place for students who may have had limited exposure to water-based activities.

Primary-aged students may undertake surfing activities if the Department Teacher-in-charge deems that each student has the physical capacity, skills and/or support to enable them to capably control the board at the proposed location.

The Department Teacher-in-charge, in consultation with the Qualified Supervisor where applicable, determines whether the students will need to develop additional skills to safely participate in the proposed activity.

Students with a disability or impairment, or who have had limited exposure to water-based activities, may participate in surfing activities provided adequate safety, control and modification measures are implemented. Specific consideration is given to:

- the impact of the student's ability to safely participate in the activity
- location and access
- supervision levels
- suitable equipment (soft-top surfboards)
- providing curriculum adjustments so the student can access the activity on the same basis as their peers
- on-shore assistance and supervision.

Students who have a medically diagnosed condition that may impact on their safety, must be cleared by a medical practitioner before they can participate.

Students must demonstrate the following skills and understandings prior to, and whilst participating in surf activities or programs:

- recognition of rips and currents, wave types and breaks
- identification and treatment of marine stingers
- self-rescue in surf conditions
- familiarity with buddy practices
- surf etiquette and rules
- recognition of signals.

The Department Teacher-in-charge and relevant supervisors must be aware of health care maintenance and/or any intensive health care needs of students, particularly allergic reactions to stings or bites in a marine environment. Protective equipment such as gloves and appropriate exposure suits should be considered for students who are susceptible.

A re-assessment of students' capacity is undertaken if any circumstances surrounding the activity change. This includes any change in the condition of the aquatic environment, their medical fitness, or their capacity to undertake the activity.

Before moving beyond broken waves, students must demonstrate proficiency moving out in surf (beyond breaking waves) whilst maintaining possession and control of the board.

Guidance

The Department's Swimming and Water Safety Continuum and the Safety Survival Sequence (refer to Swimming and Water Safety Activities document) within the Swimming Instructors Handbook and Guidelines and Royal Life Saving Swim and Survive Instructor Assessment Guide are useful resources for gauging students' swimming and water safety skills. They are only indicative of student skills at the time of assessment and their use does not guarantee students' safety, nor reduce a teacher's duty of care responsibilities.

Prior to engaging in surf riding activities, students should be able to:

- swim 200 metres in less than seven (7) minutes and
- support themselves in water for a minimum of fifteen (15) minutes without the aid of a flotation device.

If a student's capacity has been compromised due to injury or illness, they may require re-assessment prior to re-engaging with surf riding.

All participating students should be capable of remaining calm in deep water surf and/or surf that is some distance from the beach.

4. STUDENT HEALTH CARE

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

5. ACTIVITIES

Activities conducted in aquatic environments require a high degree of dynamic risk analysis and management. Surf environments can be more hazardous than calm and open water environments.

The full range of activities for the proposed surf riding program must be assessed to inform planning and selection of appropriate water-environments.

The duration of the surf activity is dependent on prevailing conditions (wind, swell and water temperature), the capacity of the students to participate and the quality/type of attire worn. Time limits for the activity must be planned prior to entering the water. The surfing activity area must be defined prior to entering the water to students and enforced.

Buddy practices and lost buddy procedures are used wherever practical.

Guidance

Surfboard riding and bodyboarding activities may be included as an advanced activity for primary students in Years 4-6 if the Department Teacher-in-charge determines that each student has the capacity and skills to participate safely in the activity.

6. EQUIPMENT

All equipment must be checked by the Qualified Supervisor and Department Teacher-in-charge, to confirm that it is appropriate to the activity, safe and well maintained.

Damaged equipment must be removed from use including surfboards that have sharp fibreglass splinters around contusions or damaged areas or “dings”.

Surf riders and body boarders must have a leg rope or leash securely fastened to the board at all times. It is recommended that body boarders wear fins that are correctly fitted and in good repair.

Leg and paddle ropes and body board leashes must be inspected for cuts, abrasions, and replaced when damaged.

Equipment required for the whole group includes:

- emergency rescue equipment (for example, surfboards, rescue tubes, wave skis, body boards or swim fins) must be in good working condition, in close proximity to participants and accessible by a Qualified Supervisor
- appropriate first aid equipment must be accessible and include items that are appropriate to the activity, environment, size and needs of the group and duration of the activity
- transport must be available in case of emergency.

Mobile phones must be available for use in an emergency situation (with allowance made for the fact that they do not operate in all localities). Where there is no mobile phone coverage, MHz, MF/HF, UHF or VHF radios should be used (27- MHz radios are being phased out and will no longer be compliant from 1 September 2028). A satellite phone is an alternative option. Knowledge of the location of a phone that has range should be known at all locations.

Where a safety or support craft is used, it must comply with Department of Transport Marine requirements.

Guidance

Boards constructed of soft materials are recommended for beginning surfers.

It is recommended if hard plastic or fibreglass boards are used or if surfing over reef, suitable helmets should be worn.

In cold weather, a wetsuit or thermal rash vest is recommended.

Nose cones should be used on boards.

Students should bring additional clothing to protect them from the sun/wind/cold before surfing, and as soon as they leave the water, as appropriate for the location and weather (for example, a towel, jumper, long trousers and hat). Students who own sunglasses should be encouraged to bring and wear them when required.

Drinking water should be available at all times.

A broad-based, water-resistant sunscreen should be applied as per manufacturer's instructions.

7. THE SUPERVISORY TEAM

Refer to [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) for further requirements.

8. EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure that when booking an external provider, they are made aware of the documentation that they need to provide, or that must be sighted.

External providers must follow all mandated requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures will be asked to supply copies of certain documentation, and/or make them available for the Department Teacher-in-charge to sight. External providers should familiarise themselves with [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) and [Appendix D: External Provider Checklist](#).

9. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team members possess skills in surf activities, and have the appropriate recent and relevant experience, to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during surf activities.

Refer to [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) for mandated:

- first aid qualifications and
- evidence requirements for all qualifications and competencies.

Minimum qualifications and/or formal training requirements

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team:

- has recent and logged experience in the activity at the level being offered to students
- has the relevant qualifications
- has experience and knowledge of local surf zones, rips and current, including surf types and patterns
- has current aquatic rescue qualifications, relevant to the activity and location and the physical attributes required be able to affect such a rescue
- understands the emergency responses and supervision responsibilities
- can perform first aid, including CPR (holds a current first aid qualification that is relevant to the activity and location).

The Qualified Supervisors must hold the following:

Qualified Supervisor requirements	Must have recent and relevant logged experience and at least <u>ONE</u> of the following: • <i>Current Surf Board Riding</i> accreditation: ○ <i>Foundation Surf Coach Accreditation (Formerly Level 1)</i> ○ <i>Progression Surf Coach Accreditation (Formerly Level 2)</i> • RLSSA <i>School Teacher Aquatic Rescue Training (START)</i> certificate • SLSA <i>Bronze Medallion</i> • Surf Life Saving WA (SLSWA) <i>Community Surf Rescue certificate</i> • an equivalent qualification, as recognised by the Director General.
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Guidance

Rescue and resuscitation qualifications are current for twelve months.

It is recommended that supervisors maintain evidence of their currency and experience through the use of a logbook, or similar.

Safety or support craft

Where a safety or support craft is used, the Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure that the supervisor in control of the craft:

- is competent in the use of the craft and holds one of the following:
 - a Recreational Skippers Ticket (RST)
 - *Safety Boat Operator*
 - *Australian Sailing Power Boat Handling* certificate (PBH)
 - a relevant commercial ticket.
- wears a safety tether lanyard at all times
- has recent and logged experience in affecting relevant support and rescue.

Where a safety or support craft is required to accompany participants, the craft must comply with Department of Transport *Marine: Recreational Boating* or *Marine Safety (Domestic Commercial Vessel) National Law Act 2012* requirements.

10. MINIMUM LEVEL OF SUPERVISION

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team members possess skills in the relevant surf activities and have the appropriate experience, knowledge and skills to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during surf activities.

The level of risk in aquatic activities is dynamic and must be constantly monitored and assessed.

Supervisory requirements must take into consideration the:

- age, experience and capacity of each student
- students' medical conditions, disability or impairment
- supervisors' competence and experience
- competence of supervisors at the venue
- type of activities to be undertaken
- nature of the environment
- location of the activity
- SLSWA or X (*formally Twitter*) feed of shark sightings
- weather conditions, which need to be assessed and monitored in the days leading up to the activity, on the day of the activity, and throughout the activity. The supervisory team may need to modify, relocate, or cancel the activity at any time.

Greater supervision must be provided for less able students.

For all surf activities regardless of participant age or group size, the minimum level of supervision is:

- at least two supervisors at all surf riding activities
- one of these supervisors must be a Qualified Supervisor.

The appropriate number of supervisors directly monitoring students in the water must be maintained at all times. The Department Teacher-in-charge must assess student capacity and mitigate risk by increasing ratios where required.

Students must be briefed to maintain a rigorous lookout role for a designated buddy in the water.

Students not participating in the water activity must be supervised by an additional member of the supervisory team. This cannot be the second supervisor who is designated to keep watch of the participants in the water.

Lifesavers and/or lifeguards on duty at a beach can only be considered as a supervisor for the proposed activity, if their sole responsibility at that time is to supervise the students participating in the activity.

Kindergarten - Year 3

This activity is not recommended for students in Kindergarten - Year 3.

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- One Qualified Supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof and
- One supervisor for every 8 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).
- A maximum of 8 boards per supervisor.

Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- One Qualified Supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof and
- One supervisor for every 12 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).
- A maximum of 12 boards per supervisor.

The table below illustrates the supervision requirements for common group sizes. Groups may be larger than those indicated here but must remain within the prescribed supervision ratios and any limits set out earlier in this document.

<i>Environment</i>	<i>Year Level</i>	<i>Number of Students</i>	<i>Qualified Supervisor</i>	<i>Assistant Supervisor</i>	<i>Total Supervisory team</i>
Open Water	K-3	Not recommended			
	4 - 6	1 - 16	1	1	2
		17 - 24	2	1	3
		25 - 32	2	2	4
	7 - 12	1 - 24	1	1	2
		25 - 36	2	1	3
		37 - 48	2	2	4

Guidance

Members of the supervisory team should consult the relevant lifeguard or patrol captain in charge of a location, on arrival.

The supervisory team will undertake a rescue and perform any CPR until the lifeguard or the SLSWA lifeguard or a member of the emergency services takes over responsibility for the rescue.

11. SUPERVISION STRATEGIES

The Department Teacher-in-charge, in consultation with the Qualified Supervision, must ensure that supervision strategies:

- maintain the safety and well-being of students at all times
- reflect risks associated with the activity
- address circumstances when students are not in clear view of the supervisors
- include students who are not actively participating in the activity.

An emergency response plan must be prepared for the proposed activity site.

At a patrolled beach, the lifeguard or mobile patrol should be notified on arrival.

The appropriate number of supervisors directly monitoring the students in the water must be maintained at all times.

Regular checks are made on surf conditions to confirm suitability for the entire group.

A head count or roll check should take place before, during and after students enter and leave the water.

Rules are established to confirm that all students remain in close proximity to the supervisor while participating in surf activities.

If other schools or groups are using the same venue, potential risks must be identified, and supervisory strategies put in place to deal with the nature and number of those groups.

Guidance

Consideration is given to positioning, scanning and safety check systems (as outlined in Swimming and Water Based Activities).

One member of the supervisory team should be placed on lookout from the beach or an elevated feature such as a vessel, groyne or jetty.

12. IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS

A suitable system of identifying participating students is determined after assessing the environment, the capacity of the student cohort, the type of activities that will be undertaken, and the number of participating students.

Students should wear a highly visible rash vest or identifiable item.

Supervisors should make themselves clearly identifiable by wearing an alternative colour rash vest in the water.

Guidance

Systems may include:

- confining students to designated areas not being utilised by other schools or the public
- the wearing of rash vests, standardised high-visibility lycra vests or shirts, 'life saver' or swimming caps, neoprene armbands or school uniform.

Bodyboards, and surfboards should be clearly marked and easily identifiable.

13. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

14. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

15. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

16. BRIEFING STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that all participants are briefed about:

- the educational purpose (learning intentions) and the cooperative nature of the activity
- components of the activity
- standards of behaviour, including roles and responsibilities
- hazard identification and safety requirements
- buddy practices and procedures that will be followed if members of the party become lost or separated from the group
- boundaries marked for the activity
- communication signals to gain attention and request assistance
- emergency and evacuation procedures, signals and location of emergency equipment
- how to identify currents, tides, reefs and other potential hazards of the venue, including safe entry and exit points
- minimal impact principles for that location (see Leave No Trace principles).

In addition to the above, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team have been briefed about the following:

- the role and location of supervisors
- maintaining supervision ratios (including of those students not involved in the activity)
- modified/adjusted activity requirements for students with a disability or impairment
- the system for identifying students and supervisors
- student-specific medical requirements
- conditions associated with hypothermia, sunburn and dehydration
- communication strategies that will be used throughout the activity, including designated signals to gain the attention of the whole group, and to identify when emergency assistance is required
- location of first aid kit and emergency/rescue equipment
- appropriate clothing for the activity and weather conditions, including thermal and sun protection
- aspects of the environment and expected weather conditions.

Special information sessions must be arranged for students or staff who were absent from preparatory briefings.

17. INFORMED CONSENT

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.



**Department of
Education**

APPENDIX S: SWIMMING AND WATER BASED ACTIVITIES

EFFECTIVE: 21 JULY 2025

VERSION: 3.1

SWIMMING AND WATER-BASED ACTIVITIES

This document contains specific requirements related to Swimming and Water-Based Activities and must be read in conjunction with *Appendix A: General Requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures*.

1. BACKGROUND

Students participate in many aquatic activities that are part of teaching and learning programs. Any recreation and/or outdoor education activity that is planned in or around water must meet mandated requirements. These procedures provide activity-specific requirements for the following:

- *Swimming and Water-based Activities*
- *Paddling*
- *Powerboating*
- *Sailing and Sailboarding*
- *Scuba Diving*
- *Snorkelling*
- *Surf Riding*.

Less formal activities planned in and/or around water (that are not listed), may be classified as water-based activities and therefore must meet the mandated requirements of this document.

DEFINITIONS

ASSISTANT SUPERVISOR

Assists the Qualified Supervisor and or Department Teacher-in-charge. Must have required qualifications, along with recent and relevant experience in the activity at the level being offered to the students.

CALM WATER

A still or slow moving water environment with no to low swell, within **400 meters** of a safe landing point. These areas may include a sheltered/ protected coastal area or river, dam, waterhole or inland water body.

DEPARTMENT TEACHER-IN-CHARGE

The member of the teaching staff employed by the Department of Education (or an Approved Provider) and is managing the school activity. For information relating to Approved Providers refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements*.

FREE SWIM

An informal, recreational swim with no educational purpose. Normally as a celebration following a structured activity, such as a swimming carnival or excursion. Recreational or 'free' swims present a higher risk.

OPEN WATER

An unprotected water environment that may be fast flowing or turbulent, such as a surf beach, flowing river or waterway, tidal coastal water, or areas affected by swell and or/strong currents. This also applies to calm water areas greater than **400 meters** from a safe landing point.

Note: Ocean Pools and Wave Pools may be classified as Calm Water or Open Water depending on environmental conditions. Appropriate risk assessment of the environment must be conducted to confirm adequate supervision levels and qualification requirements are maintained.

SWIMMING CARNIVAL

School swimming events may include traditional swimming competitions, activities or novelty events at swimming pools, lakes or beaches.

SWIMMING POOL

A controlled, indoor or outdoor, still water environment contained within an artificial structure, monitored for water quality.

WATER-BASED ACTIVITIES

Less formal activities occurring in and around water. Examples include team development, games and raft building.

WATER SAFETY PROGRAMS

Formal programs focusing on water safety awareness, stroke correction, fitness training and/or the preparation of students for competition in aquatic sports, such as competitive swimming, triathlons, water polo and/or lifesaving activities.

This document provides mandated requirements for planning and conducting:

- Swimming and Water Safety Programs (including Surf Lifesaving lessons)
- Swimming Carnivals
- Water-Based activities (including free swims).

Guidance

Royal Life Saving and Surf Life Saving provide specific information and fact sheets pertinent to water safety.

The Department's Swimming and Water Safety branch is responsible for the coordination of the VacSwim and Interm swimming programs. The information in these procedures does not apply to these programs.

2. ENVIRONMENT

Aquatic environments vary and their suitability must be considered when planning the activity. Each environment is unique, and open/unprotected water environments can be more hazardous than calm/protected water environments.

The Qualified Supervisor must have first-hand knowledge of the venue, weather conditions, tides and currents at that venue (see *Appendix A: General Requirements*). Research and/or a reconnaissance trip must be conducted around desired locations well in advance to confirm sites are suitable.

The Department Teacher-in-charge confirms the suitability of the venue after considering the:

- Location and planned activities
- strength of tides and currents
- presence, power and height of waves and swell
- water turbidity and temperature
- the age, capacity and skills of each student and supervision required
- qualifications and experience of the supervisor
- submerged objects and water depth variations
- possibility of members of the public or other groups in the same area.

Selected activity areas must be clearly defined (for example, by using as relevant on-shore markers, flags or natural features, off-shore buoys and/or anchored markers such as coloured plastic bottles).

A waiting area, out of the water, must be clearly defined and students must be supervised at all times.

At all aquatic locations, signage must be adhered to (particularly in relation to diving).

Weather conditions can change rapidly and must be assessed and monitored in the days leading up to the activity, on the day of the activity and throughout the activity. In particular, any swells or rips should be noted, and students instructed on how to safely negotiate out of a rip if necessary. The supervisory team may need to modify, relocate or cancel the activity at any time. Check the [Bureau of Meteorology](#) for up-to-date conditions and weather warnings.

Swimming activities must not be conducted where a river is in flood, or in known estuarine crocodile habitats. Further information is available from [The Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions](#) or [Be Crocwise](#).

Checks must be made directly prior to the activity regarding shark sightings or alerts in the area of use. In the event of a shark sighting the activity may need to be postponed, modified. Prior to conducting the activity, the Department Teacher-in-charge must access information regarding coastal conditions and shark activity. Information is available from:

- [SharkSmart](#) website
- [Surf Life Saving WA \(SLSWA\)](#) website or
- SLSWA X [Twitter feed](#).
- [Beachsafe](#).

The activity must be cancelled immediately, and students/staff removed from the water if a shark warning alert is sounded or becomes current.

Calm water environments and swimming pools

A minimum depth of **900mm** is recommended where tumble turns are expected to be performed and turn indicators in place (for example, flagged ropes must be used when backstroke is being performed).

Flagged ropes shall be suspended across the pool, **1.8 metres** above the water surface, from fixed standards placed **5.0 metres** from any end where swimmers will turn or finish.

Supporting poles should not obstruct the concourse.

False start ropes, when used, are suspended across the pool not less than **1.2 metres** above the water level from fixed standards placed **15.0 metres** in front of the starting end.

Lane ropes must not have sharp edges or fittings that could entrap fingers and must be inspected regularly.

Guidance

World Aquatics (formerly The Federation Internationale De Natation) [Open Water Swimming Manual](#) provides information to create the best possible environment for competitive use and training.

Open water environments

The swimming area must be defined by recognisable boundaries such as a bank, shorelines, flags, piers or floating ropes.

Temperature, water turbidity and the presence of submerged objects must be checked before commencing the activity.

The length of shoreline defined for use in these venues must not exceed **100 metres**.

Beach programs should be conducted at patrolled beaches wherever possible.

Swimming programs are not to be conducted if the water temperature is low and/or there is a risk of hypothermia.

Guidance

Potential dangers in aquatic environments may include: shallow water blackout, drowning, impact injuries from dumping waves or from diving into shallow water, cuts and abrasions from rocks or snags, sunburn, hypothermia, marine stings, objects in water acting as strainers, and the presence of marine craft.

It is recommended for calm and open water locations, board or ski riders should be engaged to provide additional water safety to students.

3. CAPACITY OF STUDENTS

Prior to commencing the activity, the Department Teacher-in-charge must determine whether each student has the capacity and required swimming and water safety skills to participate safely.

Students with a disability or impairment, who may not be able to swim or or who have had limited exposure to water, may participate in swimming and water-based activities provided adequate safety and support strategies are implemented. Specific consideration is given to:

- the impact of the student's ability to safely participate in the activity
- location and access
- supervision levels
- suitable flotation devices and/or support craft
- providing curriculum adjustments so the student can access the activity on the same basis as their peers
- on-shore assistance and supervision.

Alternative, modified or adjusted activities must be provided for students who do not have the capacity to participate.

The Department Teacher-in-charge must be aware of health care maintenance and/or any intensive health care needs of students, particularly allergic reactions to stings or bites in a marine environment. Protective equipment such as gloves and appropriate exposure suits should be considered for students who are susceptible.

Students who have a medically diagnosed condition that may impact on their safety must be cleared by a medical practitioner before they can participate.

A re-assessment of students' capacity is undertaken if any circumstances surrounding the activity change. This includes any change in the condition of the aquatic environment, their medical fitness, or their capacity to undertake the activity.

Guidance**Swimming**

The Department's Swimming and Water Safety Continuum and the Safety Survival Sequence (refer to Swimming and Water Safety Activities document) within the Swimming Instructors Handbook and Guidelines and Royal Life Saving Swim and Survive Instructor Assessment Guide are useful resources for gauging students' swimming and water safety skills. They are only indicative of student skills at the time of assessment and their use does not guarantee students' safety, nor reduce a teacher's duty of care responsibilities.

Guidance for teaching safe water entry and diving for beginners:

The teaching of safe water entries and diving should must be taught progressively in the following sequence:

- *In water push and glide from standing position*
- *Pool side, seated*
- *Pool side, standing crouched*
- *Poolside, standing*
- *Starting block*

Reference: Royal Life Saving Society, Australia (WA Branch).

*Skills students require to participate safely in **all water** environments may include:*

- diving or jumping, including safety jumping, from various heights
- swimming under water
- swimming in turbulent water
- catching waves
- entering and exiting the water.

*Students should demonstrate the following skills and understandings prior to, and/or whilst participating in, **open water** activities or programs:*

- swim continuously for 200m and, immediately following, tread water for one minute.
- recognition of rips and currents, wave types and breaks and how to safely negotiate out of a rip
- dangerous marine animals and treatment of stings/bites
- self-rescue in surf conditions
- familiarity with buddy practices
- surf etiquette and rules
- recognition of hand signals.

4. STUDENT HEALTH CARE

Refer to [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) for further requirements.

5. ACTIVITIES

The Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure that the full range of activities for the proposed swimming or water-based activities program is assessed to inform planning and selection of appropriate water-environments. On the day of the activity, the supervisory team must assess conditions at the location as being suitable for participating students.

Buddy practices and lost buddy procedures are used wherever practical.

Diving

For crouching and standing dives, it is preferable to have a depth of **2.0 metres**. Diving must not be taught in shallow water (for example, water that is less than **1.5 metres** deep). It is recognised that some pools may not provide appropriate water depths. If the preferred minimum water depth is not available, a risk assessment must be conducted, recorded and all supervisors informed of its findings and recommendations.

Flat racing dives should be taught from the side of a swimming pool in deep water before allowing a dive entry into more shallow water, or from a starting block.

Springboard/Platform Diving

Where diving is to be performed, consideration must be given to each student's diving competence and the depth of the water. Diving must not be taught in shallow water. Diving classes must be segregated from swimming areas.

Guidance

Supervisors should be aware that the following activities present a greater risk:

- the use of diving towers and springboards'
- interactive, floating play equipment and inflatables. These items should be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and any relevant [CEO Instructions](#).

If diving activities are planned, the NSW Department of Education and Training [Safe Water Entry for Competitions](#) provides information about diving for students, as well as a diving depth matrix that helps supervisors determine the relevant depth of water required for various diving activities.

Refer to the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries for [Pool Depth Guidelines](#).

Beach activities

A pre-start safety check must include the identification of rips. A review of how to safely negotiate out of the rip must be conducted with students.

When planning activities that include free swims, the Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure that the capacity of the students is suitable to the selected aquatic environment and risk-managed accordingly (refer to *Appendix B: Risk Management Plan*).

6. EQUIPMENT

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that equipment to be used for the activity conforms to the relevant Australian Standard, is appropriate to the activity, safe and in good working order (for example, swimming and rescue equipment, swimming pool lane ropes).

Emergency rescue equipment will vary according to the aquatic activity. The following equipment should be considered, with the most appropriate selected for the venue and made available:

- reaching aids
- throw rope
- personal flotation device
- spinal board
- a whistle
- surfboard
- rescue tubes and boards
- access to board riders
- a life-saving ring
- wave skis
- body boards
- swim fins.

Rescue equipment must be readily accessible at each teaching station and/or at other places where students are swimming or diving.

Appropriate first aid equipment must be readily accessible. The first aid kit must contain items appropriate for the specific water-based activity, the location, size and needs of the group, and the duration of the activity.

In case of emergency, appropriate communication equipment must be readily available. Mobile phones must be available for use in an emergency situation (with allowance made for the fact that they do not operate in all localities). Where there is no mobile phone coverage, MHz, MF/HF or VHF radios should be used (27- MHz radios are being phased out and will no longer be compliant from 1 September 2028). A satellite phone is an alternative option. Consideration should be given to carrying an EPIRB and the viability of participating in water-based activities in locations where access to emergencies services and communication is limited.

Students should be protected from excessive exposure to the sun to minimise the risk of sunburn (for example, using hats, protective clothing, sunblock and sun glasses).

The use of goggles and/or swimming caps (especially for students with long hair) is recommended.

Appropriate footwear (for example, watershoes) should be worn when swimming in water where visibility is limited and the bottom surface is unknown.

Guidance

A broad-spectrum, water-based sunscreen should be applied as per the manufacturer's instructions. Students who own sunglasses should be encouraged to bring and wear them. Drinking water should be available at all times.

7. THE SUPERVISORY TEAM

Refer to *Appendix A: General Requirements* for further requirements.

8. EXTERNAL PROVIDERS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must ensure that when booking an external provider, they are made aware of the documentation that they need to provide, or that must be sighted.

External providers must follow all mandated requirements in the Recreation and Outdoor Education Activities for Public Schools Procedures will be asked to supply copies of certain documentation, and/or make them available for the Department Teacher-in-charge to sight. External providers should familiarise themselves with [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) and [Appendix D: External Provider Checklist](#).

9. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCIES

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that supervisory team members possess the skills required for aquatic activities, and have the appropriate experience to identify and manage potential risks in the appropriate water environment.

Refer to [Appendix A: General Requirements](#) for mandated:

- first aid qualifications
- evidence requirements for qualifications and competencies.

Rescue and CPR requirements

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team:

- has recent and relevant experience in the activity at the level being offered to students
- recent and relevant experience in instruction of the desired aquatic program, and providing emergency rescue
- has the relevant qualifications, including current CPR qualifications
- understands the emergency responses and supervision responsibilities.

All supervisors must, as a minimum, be able to swim twice the length of the area they are supervising and be able to affect a rescue.

Recommended minimum qualifications and/or formal training requirements

Recognised qualifications are specific to different aquatic environments.

At least one member of the supervisory team must hold a current, activity-specific qualification and/or have attained current, activity-specific competencies through a recognised tertiary institution or Registered Training Organisation recognised by the Department, including:

Swimming Pools and Calm water	Must have at least <u>ONE</u> of the following: • AUSTSWIM <i>Teacher of Swimming and Water Safety</i> certificate (for swimming pools only) • ASCTA Swim Australia Teacher (SAT) qualification (for swimming pools only) • <i>Bronze (or higher)</i> award relevant to the specific activity under the <i>National Coaching Accreditation Scheme</i> • Royal Life Saving Society Australia (RLSSA) <i>Swimming Instructor</i> certificate (for swimming pools only) • RLSSA <i>School Teacher Aquatic Rescue Training</i> START certificate (for closed and open water locations) • RLSSA <i>Aquatic Rescue</i> qualification • Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) <i>Surf Rescue</i> certificate • Surf Life Saving Western Australia (SLSWA) <i>Community Surf Rescue</i> certificate • RLSSA <i>Bronze Medallion</i> qualification or equivalent • RLSSA <i>Pool Lifeguard</i> certificate (swimming pools only) • Australian <i>White Water Rescue Training</i> certificate (for non-surf environments, such as a lake exposed to wind or waves) • an equivalent award, as recognised by the Director General.
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Open water	Must have at least ONE of the following: • SLSA <i>Bronze Medallion</i> • RLSSA <i>Bronze Medallion</i> (not suitable for a surf beach environment where there are waves and currents) • SLSA <i>Surf Rescue</i> certificate • SLSWA <i>Community Surf Rescue</i> certificate • RLSSA <i>School Teacher Aquatic Rescue Training</i> (START) certificate • <i>White Water Rescue Training</i> certificate (for non-surf environments, such as a lake exposed to wind or waves) • <i>Bronze (or higher)</i> award relevant to the specific activity under the <i>National Coaching Accreditation Scheme</i> • an equivalent award, as recognised by the Director General.
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Guidance

Records of qualifications

A record of staff swimming and water safety qualifications should be maintained by the school. The date of issue of the qualification and formal notification of any subsequent renewal or upgrade should be included.

It is recommended that supervisors maintain evidence of their currency and experience through the use of a logbook, or similar.

10. MINIMUM LEVELS OF SUPERVISION

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team members possess skills in the relevant water-based activities and have the appropriate recent and relevant experience and knowledge to identify and manage potential risks at any stage during the water-based activities.

Supervisory requirements must take into consideration the:

- age, experience and capacity of each student
- students' medical conditions, disability or impairment
- supervisors' competence and experience
- type of activity to be undertaken
- location of the activity and nature of the environment (for example, a swimming pool, calm or open water location)
- supervision of students not participating
- *Surf Life Saving WA Twitter feed* of surf locations and shark sightings
- weather conditions, which must be assessed and monitored in the days leading up to the activity, on the day of the activity, and throughout the activity. The supervisory team may need to modify, relocate or cancel the activity at any time.

The level of risk in aquatic activities is dynamic and must be constantly monitored. The appropriate number of supervisors directly monitoring students in the water must be maintained at all times.

Greater supervision may be required for less able students due to the nature of the water-based activity, or inherent risks at a particular venue (for example, a wave pool, water slide or surf beach).

A second supervisor is not required for all aquatic environments (Years 7-12), provided that there are clear systems in place for supervisors can quickly summon assistance if required.

Students must be within the Qualified Supervisors line of sight at all times. If the activity goes outside of line of sight, additional supervisors are required to maintain adequate supervision.

The minimum level of supervision is dependent on the number of participants in the water and the aquatic environment in which the activity takes place.

The maximum number of students in the water at one time is based on an assessment of the water and weather conditions, and the impact of these conditions on effective supervision. If there are not enough qualified staff to supervise the number of students in the water, students will need to be rotated in and out of the water, so that safe supervisory requirements can be maintained.

All students not directly involved in swimming and water-based activities must be appropriately supervised.

SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY PROGRAMS

Formal Programs, focusing on water safety awareness, stroke correction, fitness training and/or the preparation of students for competition in aquatic sports, such as competitive swimming, triathlons, water polo and/or lifesaving activities.

SWIMMING POOLS

Kindergarten - Year 3

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof and
- one Assistant Supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 32 students or part thereof and
- one Assistant Supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

It is recommended that there are two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 32 students or part thereof.

CALM WATER

Kindergarten - Year 3

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof and
- one Assistant Supervisor for every six students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof and
- one Assistant Supervisor for every 12 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 32 students or part thereof and
- one Assistant Supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

OPEN WATER

Kindergarten - Year 3

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof and
- one Assistant Supervisor for every four students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof and
- one Assistant Supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof.

The table below illustrates the minimum supervision requirements for common group sizes. Groups may be larger than those indicated here but must remain within the prescribed supervision ratios and any limits set within this document.

SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY PROGRAMS

Activity	Year level	Environment	Number of students	Qualified Supervisor	Assistant Supervisor	Total supervisory team
Swimming and water safety programs	K - 3	Swimming Pool	1 - 8	1	1	2
			9 - 16	1	1	2
			17 - 24	1	2	3
			25 - 32	2	2	4
		Calm Water	1 - 6	1	1	2
			7 - 12	1	1	2
			13 - 18	1	2	3
			19 - 24	1	3	4
			25 - 30	2	3	5
		Open Water	1 - 4	1	1	2
			5 - 8	1	1	2
			9 - 12	1	2	3
			13 - 16	1	3	4
			17 - 20	2	3	5
	4 - 6	Swimming Pool	1 - 16	1	1	2
			17 - 32	1	1	2
			33 - 48	2	1	3
		Calm Water	1 - 12	1	1	2
			13 - 24	1	1	2
			25 - 36	2	1	3
		Open Water	1 - 8	1	1	2
			9 - 16	1	1	2
			17 - 24	2	1	3
			25 - 32	2	2	4
	7 - 12	Swimming Pool	1 - 32	1	0	1
			33 - 64	2	0	2
		Calm Water	1 - 32	1	1	2
			33 - 48	2	1	3
		Open Water	1 - 16	1	1	2
			17 - 32	2	0	2

SWIMMING CARNIVALS

School swimming events may include traditional swimming competitions, activities or novelty events at swimming pools, lakes or beaches.

SWIMMING POOLS

Kindergarten - Year 3

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof and
- one Assistant Supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 32 students or part thereof and
- one Assistant Supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

There must be two Supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 32 students or part thereof.

CALM WATER

Kindergarten - Year 3

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof and
- one Assistant Supervisor for every six students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof and
- one Assistant Supervisor for every 12 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 32 students or part thereof.

OPEN WATER

Kindergarten - Year 3

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof and
- one Assistant Supervisor for every four students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof and
- one Assistant Supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof.

The table below illustrates the minimum supervision requirements for common group sizes. Groups may be larger than those indicated here but must remain within the prescribed supervision ratios and any limits set within this document.

SWIMMING CARNIVALS

Activity	Year level	Environment	Number of students	Qualified Supervisor	Assistant Supervisor	Total supervisory team
Swimming carnivals	K - 3	Swimming pool	1 - 8	1	1	2
			9 - 16	1	1	2
			17 - 24	1	2	3
			25 - 32	2	2	4
		Calm water	1 - 6	1	1	2
			7 - 12	1	1	2
			13 - 18	1	2	3
			19 - 24	1	3	4
			25 - 30	2	3	5
		Open water	1 - 8	1	1	2
			9 - 12	1	2	3
			13 - 16	1	3	4
			17 - 20	2	3	5
	4 - 6	Swimming pool	1 - 16	1	1	2
			17 - 32	1	1	2
			33 - 48	2	1	3
		Calm water	1 - 12	1	1	2
			13 - 24	1	1	2
			25 - 36	2	1	3
		Open water	1 - 8	1	1	2
			9 - 16	1	1	2
			17 - 24	2	1	3
			25 - 32	2	2	4
	7 - 12	Swimming pool	1 - 32	1	1	2
			33 - 64	2	0	2
		Calm water	1 - 32	1	1	2
			33 - 64	2	0	2
		Open water	1 - 16	1	1	2
			17 - 32	2	0	2

WATER-BASED ACTIVITIES (including Free Swims)

Less formal activities occurring in and around water. Free Swims are recreational swims with no educational purpose. Normally as a celebration following a structured activity, such as a swimming carnival or excursion. Recreational or 'free' swims present a higher risk.

SWIMMING POOLS

Kindergarten - Year 3

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof and
- one Assistant Supervisor for every six students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 32 students or part thereof and
- one Assistant Supervisor for every 8 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 32 students or part thereof and
- one Assistant Supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

CALM WATER

Kindergarten - Year 3

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof and
- one Assistant Supervisor for every six students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 4 - 6

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof and
- one Assistant Supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 24 students or part thereof and
- one Assistant Supervisor for every 12 students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

OPEN WATER

Kindergarten - Year 3

This activity is not recommended for students in Years K - 3.

Year 4 - 6

This activity is only to be conducted in a fixed location with clearly defined boundaries over no greater distance than **50metres**.

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof and
- one Assistant Supervisor for every six students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

Year 7 - 12

There must be two supervisors at all times:

- one Qualified Supervisor for every 16 students or part thereof and
- one Assistant Supervisor for every eight students or part thereof (including the Qualified Supervisor).

The table below illustrates the minimum supervision requirements for common group sizes. Groups may be larger than those indicated here but must remain within the prescribed supervision ratios and any limits set within this document.

WATER-BASED ACTIVITIES (including Free Swims)

Activity	Year Level	Environment	Number of students	Qualified Supervisor	Experienced assistant supervisor	Total supervisory team
Water-based activities (including free swims)	K - 3	Swimming pool	1 - 6	1	1	2
			7 - 12	1	1	2
			13 - 18	1	2	3
			19 - 24	1	3	4
			25 - 30	2	3	5
		Calm water	1 - 12	1	1	2
			13 - 16	1	2	3
			17 - 18	2	1	3
			19 - 24	2	2	4
			25 - 30	2	3	5
		Open water	Not recommended			
	4 - 6	Swimming pool	1 - 8	1	1	2
			9 - 16	1	1	2
			17 - 24	1	2	3
			25 - 32	1	3	4
			33 - 40	2	3	5
		Calm water	1 - 8	1	1	2
			9 - 16	1	1	2
			17 - 24	1	2	3
			25 - 32	2	2	4
		Open water	1 - 12	1	1	2
			13 - 16	1	2	3
			17 - 18	2	1	3
			19 - 24	2	2	4
			25 - 30	2	3	5
	7 - 12	Swimming pool	1 - 32	1	1	2
			33 - 48	2	1	3
		Calm water	1 - 24	1	1	2
			25 - 36	2	1	3
			1 - 16	1	1	2
		Open water	17 - 24	2	1	3

Guidance

The Department's Swimming and Water Safety Continuum and the Safety Survival Sequence (refer to Swimming and Water Safety Activities document) within the Swimming Instructors Handbook and Guidelines and Royal Life Saving Swim and Survive Instructor Assessment Guide are useful resources for gauging students' swimming and water safety skills. They are only indicative of student skills at the time of assessment and their use does not guarantee students' safety, nor reduce a teacher's duty of care responsibilities.

11. SUPERVISION STRATEGIES

Supervision strategies must be confirmed by the Department Teacher-in-charge to ensure the safety and wellbeing of students is maintained at all times and must:

- reflect risks associated with proximity to water
- address circumstances when students are not in clear view of the supervisors
- include those students not actively participating in the activity
- include head counts at regular intervals.

The appropriate number of supervisors directly monitoring the students in water must be maintained at all times.

If other schools or groups are using the same venue, potential risks must be identified, and supervisory strategies put in place to deal with the nature and number of those groups, and any risks that might arise from that situation.

Life guards on duty at pools and beaches may be considered a qualified adult supervisor and part of the supervisory team only if they do not have general lifeguard duties at the venue at that time, and if their sole responsibility during the activity is for the students undertaking the activity.

At some pool venues, schools may be able to pay for life guard support (for example, the venue might designate a lifeguard to a particular event such as a swimming carnival if numbers warrant this action). Alternatively, and depending on participant numbers, the venue might consider opening only for that event. These various arrangements would need to be negotiated on an individual basis with the venue manager.

Supervisors must be appropriately attired and equipped to effect a rescue during the activity. Students are not to enter the water until instructed to do so.

Avoid lengthy, tiring training sessions and continuously monitor students for signs of fatigue exhaustion and hypothermia.

Confirm that if flotation aids are used, they are checked for correct fit.

Restrict underwater swimming to short-duration activities under close supervision. Be aware and supervise for symptoms of underwater blackout.

The supervisory team must ensure that recreational equipment such as inflatable devices and slides are used in accordance with manufacturer's instructions. Supervision of the activity must:

- maintain clear line of sight of the students throughout interaction with the device
- address potential entrapment risks associated with the device
- include students waiting to enter the water and/or device
- ensure that students exit the device and water safely.

Diving

Where diving occurs, confirm that:

- only one person is on the diving board at any one time
- no one moves across the diver's line of vision during backwards facing dives
- cross-swimming under the diving board is prohibited.

Additional supervision strategies must be put in place for:

- circumstances where all students are not in the water
- students with a disability or impairment, or who have had limited exposure to water-based activities.

Consideration is given to supervisor positioning, scanning and safety check systems.

Guidance

Swimming carnivals

Consideration should be given to the movement of students from one area to another (for example, from house/faction bays to the marshalling area).

It is recommended that a roster is developed to relieve and rotate supervisors. From time to time, a supervisor may need to leave his or her position. In such a situation, the supervisor should alert other supervisors on duty of his/her impending absence in order to confirm that the appropriate number of supervisors directly monitoring students in the water is maintained at all times.

Positioning

After taking into account environmental conditions such as wind and sun the supervisor should adopt a position that:

- *is in a position to maintain supervision of the surface and the bottom (if visible) of the aquatic environment*
- *is in a position to have timely access to appropriate rescue, safety and first aid equipment and*
- *is in close proximity to effectively scan all participants within the area or their zone (if more than one supervisor) and effectively reach a participant in distress within a short time period.*

Scanning

All supervisors should:

- *be positioned in a location that has clear, unobstructed sight lines*
- *take steps to compensate for any difficulties with sight lines (for example, distance from students, effect of reflection/glare or their ability to see below the surface of the water) by changing position or using sunglasses*
- *be alert to signs of potential trouble and/or behaviours of those in need of help.*

Safety check systems

One or more of the following safety check systems can be used:

- *Buddy and check-in systems.*
- *At a pre-arranged signal, buddies hold hands or move closer together and remain in place.*
- *Supervisors confirm that each pair of buddies is safe and that each individual is looking out for his or her partner.*

Water checks

The following water check systems can be used:

- *The supervisor signals for all swimmers (or a particular group) to leave the water.*
- *Head counts and supervisor rotations occur at the same time.*
- *Water checks can be incorporated into a structured educational activity or a planned break.*

Best practice supervisory strategies include at least one of the supervisory team who remains out of the water and is both prepared and capable of effecting a rescue if required.

12. IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS

Students and supervisors must be easily identifiable. A system of identification is determined by the Department Teacher-in-charge after assessing the aquatic environment, students' swimming and water safety skills, the type of activities to be undertaken, and the number of students. Staff and students should wear a highly visible rash vest or easily identifiable item.

Guidance

Systems for identifying students may include:

- *the wearing of lifesaver or swimming caps, neoprene armbands, rash shirts, school t shirts, vests, bibs, sashes and*
- *confining students to designated areas not being utilised by other schools or members of the public.*

Each identification system may be used in combination with others.

13. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

14. RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix B: Risk Management Plan for further requirements.

15. EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements and Appendix C: Emergency Management Planning for further requirements.

16. BRIEFING STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS

The Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that all participants are briefed about:

- the educational purpose (learning intentions) and the cooperative nature of the activity
- components of the activity (including skills required)
- standards of behaviour, including roles and responsibilities
- hazard identification and safety requirements
- buddy practices and procedures that will be followed if members of the party become lost or separated from the group
- boundaries marked for the activity
- communication signals to gain attention and request assistance
- emergency and evacuation procedures, signals and location of emergency equipment
- how to identify currents, rips, reefs and other potential hazards of the venue, including safe entry and exit points
- minimal impact principles for that location (see Leave No Trace principles).

In addition to the above, the Department Teacher-in-charge must confirm that the supervisory team have been briefed about the following:

- the role and location of supervisors
- maintaining supervision ratios (including of those students not involved in the activity)
- modified/adjusted activity requirements for students with a disability or impairment
- the system for identifying students and supervisors
- the route to be followed including pre-determined stops and/or meeting points along the way (if applicable)
- student-specific medical requirements
- conditions associated with hypothermia, sunburn and dehydration
- communication strategies that will be used throughout the activity, including designated signals to gain the attention of the whole group, and to identify when emergency assistance is required
- location of first aid kit and emergency/rescue equipment
- appropriate clothing for the activity and weather conditions, including thermal and sun protection
- aspects of the environment and expected weather conditions.

Special briefing sessions must be arranged for students who were absent from preparatory briefings.

Recreational or free swims

Before participating in a recreational or free swims, students are briefed about safety rules (for example, defined boundaries, communication signals, no acrobatics, no jumping into water etc.).

Guidance

Supervisors should be aware of the phenomenon of hypoxic blackout, also known as “shallow-water blackout” during water-based activities, particularly during ‘free swims’ (these can occur when there is excessive hyperventilation followed by holding of breath when diving or descending into water, making it possible to lose consciousness). Refer to Royal Life Saving Australia for additional information.

17. INFORMED CONSENT

Refer to Appendix A: General Requirements for further requirements.

APPENDIX 1: SWIMMING AND WATER SAFETY CONTINUUM

The *Swimming Instructors Handbook and Guidelines* contains a coloured version of this page.

S1 1. Enter water safely Shallow, safe exit 2. Exhale in water Face in 3. Open eyes under water Identify an object 4. Submerge Waist deep 5. Glide forward and recover Waist deep (minimum) 6. Float or glide backward and recover Waist deep flotation aid acceptable	S2 7. Glide forward and kick 3m Horizontal body position, face in 8. Glide backward, kick and recover No set distance 9. Swim 5m freestyle Face submerged 10. Scull/tread water Basic hand and leg action, chest deep	S3 11. Swim 10m freestyle Breathing 12. Glide backward and kick 5m Arms by side 13. Demonstrate breaststroke leg action On back with board 14. Demonstrate survival sculling On back 15. Demonstrate a forward roll Extension
S4 16. Swim 15m freestyle Regular breathing 17. Swim 10m backstroke Catch up acceptable 18. Swim 10m survival backstroke OR Below water arm recovery 19. Swim 5m breaststroke kick On front with board 20. Scull head first on back Without leg action 21. Recover an object Chest deep 22. Swim in deep water (Only ____ m depth available)	S5 23. Swim 25m freestyle Proficient technique 24. Swim 15m backstroke Alternating arm action 25. Swim 15m survival backstroke OR Symmetrical leg action 26. Swim 15m breaststroke Symmetrical leg action 27. Demonstrate a surface dive Chest deep. Recover an object	S6 28. Swim continuously 50m freestyle OR * 25m freestyle and * 25m backstroke, or side-stroke, or backstroke, or breaststroke Proficient technique 29. Swim 25m backstroke Proficient technique 30. Swim 25m survival backstroke Proficient technique 31. Swim 25m breaststroke Proficient technique 32. Demonstrate a dive entry Deep water required
S7 33. Scull feet first on back Sculling hand action 34. Demonstrate eggbeater kick Water polo kick 35. Swim 150 metres Proficient technique ○ 25m backstroke ○ 50m breaststroke ○ 50m freestyle ○ 25m survival backstroke	S8 36. Swim 25m sidestroke Scissor kick required 37. Demonstrate dolphin kick Extension 38. Swim 200 metres Proficient technique ○ 50m backstroke ○ 50m breaststroke ○ 50m freestyle ○ 25m survival backstroke ○ 25m sidestroke	S9: Non-contact rescues 39. Swim 10m butterfly Extension 40. Demonstrate a tumble turn Extension 41. Swim 300 metres Proficient technique ○ 50m freestyle (or 25m butterfly and 25m freestyle) ○ 50m backstroke ○ 50m breaststroke ○ 50m freestyle ○ 50m sidestroke ○ 50m survival backstroke 42. Basic principles of resuscitation (as an extension)

***Please Note: ADULT SUPERVISION IS ALWAYS NECESSARY**

It cannot be assumed that all skills will be repeated under different conditions. The information within this continuum is only indicative of students' skills at the time of assessment. It does not guarantee students' safety; nor does it reduce teachers' duty of care.

APPENDIX 2: SAFETY SURVIVAL SEQUENCES

The following safety and survival skills are taught at the appropriate stage to further develop students' understandings of water safety and personal survival.

Please note that skills that have been previously taught are not necessarily re-listed.

S1 • Confident entry into and exit from the water. • Float for 10-15 seconds with a flotation aid.	S2 • Glide forward and recover to a standing position. • Float for 30 seconds with a flotation aid. • Be pulled to safety.	S3 • Glide and swim 10m, recover to upright position. • Support body in an upright position and signal distress.
S4 • Swim and survival scull for 60 seconds. • Grasp an object and be pulled to safety.	S5 • Step in entry. • Scull for 60 seconds using combination of survival sculling and horizontal sculling keeping the face above water. • Grasp a flotation aid thrown for support and swim for 60 seconds. • Be pulled to safety by a partner.	S6 • Dive entry into deep water. • Rotation of the tucked body, keeping the face above the water. • Swim slowly for three minutes, using two recognised survival strokes. • Grasp an aid thrown for support and kick to safety.
S7 • Enter water using a compact jump. • Swim slowly for four minutes using two recognised survival strokes.	S8 Dressed in swimwear, shorts and t-shirt, demonstrate: • Two minutes survival sculling, floating or treading water, then; • Three minutes swimming slowly, using three recognised survival strokes, keeping the arms below the surface, changing each minute.	S9 Non-contact rescues: • Assistance in shallow water. • Defensive position and reverse. • Delivery of flotation aid in deeper water.

Please Note: It cannot be assumed that all skills will be repeated under different conditions.

ADULT SUPERVISION IS ALWAYS NECESSARY