



Department of
Education

APPENDIX O: SAILING AND SAIL BOARDING

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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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
		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.