



Department of
Education

Appendix E: Abseiling and Climbing

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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 an assisted breaking device, such as a GriGri, 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 natural surface abseiling or climbing activities are in progress, including when participants are at the base of a cliff/face, or when participating in artificial abseiling or roping activities where there is risk of debris/objects falling from above.
- 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:	AND 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 an assisted breaking device such as a GriGri.

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.

	Environment	Degree of difficulty	Number of students	Qualified Supervisors	Assistant Supervisor	Active systems	Total supervisory team
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. Below Call), 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.