

# CHECKLIST FOR WATER-BASED EXCURSION

## Hampton Harbour , Dampier

Dear Principal and Teacher in Charge,

As Manager of the Dampier Camp School I feel obligated to share with you the benefits of my first-hand knowledge and experiences at this excursion venue.

I have taken the liberty of completing, for the most part, DET's "Checklist for Water Based Excursions" on your behalf. This checklist is intended to assist teachers-in-charge in the conduct of risk assessments of the management of this excursion. It is also intended to assist Principals, who must assess applications for such excursions.

John Lally,  
Manager, Dampier Camp School.

### PURPOSE OF THE EXCURSION

The aim is for students to participate in and enjoy a range of outdoor recreation (including aquatic based) activities which will contribute to the development of their confidence, self esteem, motivation, enthusiasm, skill level, fitness, initiative, and self-discipline.

Participation in these activities will contribute to the development of interpersonal skills such as assertive communication, negotiation, conflict resolution, cooperation and leadership. The student will be challenged to accept responsibility, to act responsibly and to contribute effectively to groups and teams.

### ACTIVITIES

Introduction to Sea Kayaks	Raft making *	Snorkelling
Orienteering *	Aquatic team games	Fishing
Swimming	Boating Safety	Sand castle Competitions

(Note: All activities indicated with a \* will be included in the program)

## 1. ASSESSING THE RISKS

### 1.1 Assessment of the swimming environment

• The site has been assessed according to potential risk of accidents or injuries, factors analysed included:-

- depth range and expanse of water,
- water visibility,
- hazards, eg. debris, submerged trees, rocks etc.
- effects of prevailing winds,
- potential for injury from falling or wind blown objects,
- likelihood of bites and stings,
- water temperature;
- shade availability;
- ease of launching and recovering equipment;
- ease of supervision;
- ability to execute a rescue;
- likelihood of having to share the venue;
- distance from emergency services;
- vehicle access; and,
- mobile phone reception;

and is considered to be appropriate for this excursion.

• I am a qualified supervisor who has conducted excursions at this location on a regular basis for fifteen (15) years without any major incident. I give you my assurance that I am familiar with this specific location, at all times of year and under all conditions.

- The activity area is clearly defined by a combination of obvious landmarks and strategically placed buoys, if required.
- Rescue equipment in the form of a 7 metre Southwind or Aluminium dinghy and spare canoe is provided.
- My experience and local knowledge of this venue allows me to cater for changes in activity depending upon weather conditions or other risk factors.
- Being the "local expert" there is no need to seek advice from other bodies.

### **1.2 Assessment of the students' water skills and abilities**

- All parent or guardians of students participating in this excursion are required to indicate the child's swimming ability in relation to this excursion on a "Medical and Water Based Authority Form" (attached). Should the parent indicate any uncertainty the child will be required to satisfy me of their ability. This will take the form of a verbal and / or practical assessment. If any doubt still exists in my mind I will always err on the side of caution and place restrictions on the parameters of the child's participation. 4
- Students who do not have the required skills and abilities will have been, through the process described above, identified. Additional safeguards and restrictions will be enforced for these students, including:
  - reducing the level of their involvement;
  - limiting them to shallower, smaller, more directly supervised areas;
  - provision of additional buoyancy aids;
  - "buddying" them up with an adult.
- Similar provision will be made for any student with special needs.
- Each student's "Medical and Water Based Authority Form" will provide accurate information regarding student medical and behavioural conditions.

### **1.3 Assessment of activities**

- All activities and equipment have been assessed and comply with all DET regulations and guidelines.
- Activities and equipment are suitable for the students' age, experience and ability.
- Areas are defined for students that do not have the required skills and abilities and those with special needs. (For further details see 1.1 dot point three above.)
- Activity time will vary dependent on my continual assessment of the prevailing conditions and the skill and ability level of the students. Myself or Camp school staff will personally be supervising the water based activities at all times in conjunction with the required ratio of supervisors. The teacher-in-charge will be responsible for rostering back up supervisors.

### **1.4 Assessment of the capabilities of the supervisory team**

- I have been a teacher for over thirty years and as previously mentioned have been responsible for planning, executing and supervising excursions at this location on a regular basis for fifteen (15) years. All without major incident.
- I have:
  - a proven record as a competent swimmer;
  - experience in identifying and establishing a safe activity environment;
  - the capacity to effect a rescue from danger;
  - the capacity to monitor weather and environmental conditions before and during activities;
  - the capacity to monitor the physical performance of the students;
  - the ability to make decisions with regard to moving or canceling the excursion if conditions are adverse;
  - the recognized qualification i.e. current Bronze Medallion and Resuscitation Certificate to supervise the excursion.
- I am an Examiner in Small Craft Safety Courses for DPI and Yachting Australia..

### **1.5 Assessment of external providers**

- I am not deemed to be an external provider as such as I am a qualified teacher employed by DET and I manage a non commercial center.

## **2. LEVEL OF SUPERVISION**

- An appropriate number of qualified supervisors for the specific environment will jointly be covered by myself, my staff and the school.

## **3. SUPERVISION STRATEGIES**

- On-site supervision strategies will include:
  - defining and re-defining the work area according to the prevailing conditions, the skill and ability of the students, and my assessment of the capabilities of the supervisory team;
  - strategic placement of supervisors in and around the work area;
  - a combination of actively participating supervisors and non active supervisors required to constantly scan the area;
  - a buddy and "buddy buddy" i.e. two pairs looking out for each other, system;
  - a combined whistle and loud hailer communication system will be used to:-
    - gain the attention of students,
    - to inform them of the need to buddy check,
    - to evoke an emergency response,
    - to signal a water check (land based head count) or safety stop (water based head count),
    - and to signal the end of the activity.
  - students will be required to gain permission prior to leaving the area for any reason e.g. toileting, or dressing, in which case they will also be required to be accompanied by their buddy.
- The rotation of school based supervisors will be the responsibility of the teach-in-charge with changes most commonly occurring at the commencement of a rotation of activities.

## **4. IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS**

- Seldom is there any other people at this venue. Being able to distinguish one group from another is, therefore not a problem. Should the need arise all students participating in the activity will be distinguished by wearing a camp school provided buoyancy vest.
- Unless students can demonstrate obvious skills and abilities above the requirements of stage six (6) of the Education Department of Western Australia Swimming and Water Safety Continuum, any student who is yet to pass this stage will be required to wear a buoyancy vest for all water based activities.

## **5. PARENTAL INFORMATION**

- All parents/guardians will need to be fully informed with respect to the purpose, venue or facility and nature of the water-based excursion. ○
- Consent forms will need to be signed and recorded. ○

## **6. COMMUNICATION STRATEGY**

- The following whistle system will be implemented in conjunction with verbal instructions using a megaphone:
  - one (1) blast of the whistle = stop and listen to verbal instructions
  - two (2) blasts of the whistle = buddy check followed by a buddy - buddy check
  - three (3) blasts of the whistle = activity finished
  - short blast in succession and arms waved above head = emergency, vacate the dam at the nearest point and assemble in the designated area.

## **7. PLANNING FOR EMERGENCIES**

- The Dampier Camp School CRISIS RESPONSE plan for fire, fatalities, serious accident, contagious diseases and missing child is attached. Students will be advised that in the event of an emergency:
  - first consideration should be given to self preservation;
  - in case of a snake bite the students are reminded to move out of further harms way and for the victim to stay put;

supervisors should be alerted as soon as possible, if in the water by waving of arms above the head in combination with calls for help, or if out of the water by directly seeking out one of the supervisors; and, short blasts of the whistle will indicate to all students to assemble at the predetermined assembly area i.e. the beach area.

At this stage teachers in charge should take note:

either myself or some other qualified supervisor will administer first aid.

emergency services will be contacted by mobile phone (ambulance 000 or police 91 831 1144 and Camp School 91 831 374 or 91 830 124 or 91831 365 ); Dampier Port Communications if on water.

teacher-in-charge to supervise students;

Camp School Manager to co-ordinate evacuation should it be required.

## **8. SHARED RESPONSIBILITY WITH VENUE OR FACILITY**

- Roles and responsibilities are detailed in the Camp School Booklet.

## **9. BRIEFING FOR STUDENTS AND SUPERVISORS**

- Students and supervisors will be sat down on arrival at the venue and I will brief them on:

the work area (in and out of bounds);

specific dangers;

buddy system and the buddy - buddy system;

communication strategies;

availability of food and drinks;

change facilities;

toilet facilities;

requirement to gain permission before leaving the work area and the requirement to be accompanied by a buddy;

rules, especially the prohibition of deliberately entering the air trap of a submerged canoe, and those concerning the use of the jumping / diving platform;

activity groupings;

the buoyancy characteristics of the canoes and other equipment being used;

what to do if they get into difficulty;

emergency and evacuation procedures;

rotation system;

approximate activity time;

first aid facilities;

standards of behavior required; and

punishments for breaching requirements.

- I will require briefing from the teacher-in-charge, on:

swimming ability of students;

allergies, medical conditions, phobias etc of students;

behavioral problems associated with any students;

capabilities of the supervisory team; and,

culturally and / or linguistically diverse students.

*Teacher-in-charge* ----- *Date* -----

*I am satisfied that appropriate planning has taken place to ensure the duty of care to and safety of all participants.*

*Principal* ----- *Date* -----