ADVENTURE ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

# Orienteering

Schools must follow the Department’s Excursion Policy and Guidelines and the requirements outlined in this document when planning, conducting and approving adventure activities.

These guidelines are for developing risk management plans specific to the location, activity and group participating. They are not intended to be used as a training manual. Staff instructing the activity must have sufficient knowledge/expertise in the activity.

Orienteering focuses on the use and interpretation of maps in outdoor environments. A compass may be used as an aid to navigation.

Orienteering activities in school programs range from simple exercises using a map in the school or base-camp grounds, through to the use of maps in parklands and the full use of contour maps in the bush.

Note on rogaining: rogaining is derived from orienteering involving cross country navigation and route planning with maps and compasses in order to make controls for scoring. These guidelines, whilst relevant to the sport of rogaining, do not specifically address the potential activity-specific issues in rogaining.

If an overnight camping component is planned, please also refer to Camping guidelines.

## Staffing definitions

**Staff** – any adult approved by the principal who provides supervisory, instructional or educational elements of the activity or excursion. See Excursions Guidelines: Staffing for further details.

**Teacher** – a staff member registered with the Victorian Institute of Teaching who provides a supervisory role on a program.

The following roles can be filled by school staff, a teacher or an external provider, or a volunteer (See [Volunteers in Schools](https://www2.education.vic.gov.au/pal/volunteers/policy) policy).

**Designated Instructor** – the appointed staff member on a program who provides the lead technical expertise and supervision for the activity.

**Instructor** – a staff member who provides professional, technical expertise and supervision for the activity.

**Assistant Instructor** – a staff member who provides assistance to the instructor(s) in the provision of technical expertise and supervision for the activity. An assistant instructor role may be filled by a volunteer (See: Volunteers in Schools Policy).

## Student preparAtion and skills

Planning for activities should begin with an assessment of each students’ current knowledge, skills and experience in outdoor environments and the specific orienteering activity.

The assessment of students’ current knowledge, skills and experience in the activity should be documented using [[https://www.education.vic.gov.au/_layouts/images/icdoc.png](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/safety/participrep.doc)Documentation of Participant Preparation, Prerequisite Skills/Knowledge​ ​ (doc - 139kb)](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/safety/participrep.doc).

Beginners must undertake lessons to receive competent instruction in basic skills taking into account factors such as activity area conditions, weather, terrain and the progress of students.

Prior to their involvement in orienteering activities students must possess the relevant levels of skill and fitness for the orienteering course.

Students should be introduced to map reading using basic symbols and features in a familiar environment, such as the school grounds, before progressing to courses with less-defined boundaries.

Start with simple courses that have controls at large distinct features (for example, track junctions or hill tops) and on handrail features (roads, fences, creeks). Only when students have demonstrated navigation and contour map interpretation skills and are confident in their use should they progress to orienteering in larger or more remote areas.

The instructor should ascertain the previous experience of each student.

Instructional staff must brief students on:

* equipment, clothing and footwear that is suitable for the activity and location
* safety measures appropriate to identify and control any foreseeable risks associated with the activity and the environment
* minimal environmental impact techniques relevant to the activity and location
* historical and cultural considerations relevant to the activity and location
* activity scope and boundaries
* communication and communication signals
* relevant terminology.

A basic introductory briefing should also include:

* course boundaries
* what the markers/controls look like
* the importance of reporting to the finish line by a given time, even if the course is not completed
* the safety bearing that will take them to an easily identifiable geographic feature such as a major track or fence line, that can be used as a handrail to guide them to the finish line
* the need for regular hydration and regular sun protection
* what to do in an emergency (for example, injury, snake bite, if lost), including where staff are located or what to do if an evacuation of the area is necessary
* rules of ‘fair play’ such as not removing or damaging controls and not calling out when at controls
* care of the environment, including respect for wildlife, plants, trees etc.

For orienteering courses in larger areas and more remote bushland, students should participate in groups of three for safety reasons, so that if one student needs help the partner can remain with the student but alert another group to seek help.

The assembly start/finish area of the orienteering activity must be accessible by vehicle.

##### Student medical conditions

When there are students with known medical conditions (asthma, anaphylaxis), other students in the group must be briefed on appropriate emergency procedures (how to use an EpiPen, where staff will be located etc).

## Course Design

The activity boundaries should be clearly defined and communicated to students and staff, with points at which vehicle access is possible for emergency situations.

The way in which orienteering courses are designed and laid out can help to ensure students are never far from the start/finish. For example, a ‘cloverleaf design’ is a common orienteering layout.

The degree of difficulty of the course should be considered so that all students can be challenged at their various levels of ability and fitness.

## Equipment

All equipment used must be in sound condition, suitable for the activity and must meet applicable industry safety standards. This should be documented in the pre activity check.

##### Map and compass

The map should be carried in a waterproof sleeve. The compass should be checked before use and carried in the hand with a wrist string or carried round the neck and tucked into shirt when orienteering.

##### Whistle

Participants should carry a whistle for emergencies and be instructed in their use.

## Experience and qualifications

Staff instructing the activity should have sufficient knowledge and experience of the activity and the activity environment to operate in all reasonably foreseeable conditions.

The designated instructor/s must hold one of the following:

* Level O, ‘Orientation to Orienteering’ a qualification from Victorian Orienteering Association (school ground and parkland environments) OR
* Level I, NCAS (Teachers/Instructors Course) a qualification from Victorian Orienteering Association (Bush and remote bushland environments)
* equivalent documented training and experience from another training provider or education institution
* equivalent documented experience in lieu of certification/accreditation.

Equivalent experience should include:

* ability to interpret maps including topographic maps
* ability to use a compass to navigate
* ability to apply map and compass skills to navigation in a range of outdoor environments
* previous experience in the activity location or similar terrain.

The designated assistant to the instructor must:

* be able to assume a supervisory role during the activity
* have the ability to participate competently in emergency response procedures
* have conferred with the instructor to establish the emergency response and supervision responsibilities.

 [Documentation of staff qualifications and experience (doc - 151kb)](http://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/safety/staffqual.doc) must be used to document staff experience and training in lieu of the listed qualifications.

Where an external contractor is chosen to run all or part of this activity, see: Excursions Guidelines – External Providers.

## Supervision

Supervision is a critical factor in managing risk in the outdoors.

A minimum of two staff members must be present for each activity, one with main responsibility for activity instruction and the other to assist the instructor.

It may be necessary to increase the staff allocation based on ability to observe or monitor students on activity with consideration to:

* students (medical conditions, age, physical, mental and emotional maturity, ability and experience)
* group (dynamics and size)
* staff (medical conditions, age, ability and experience, qualifications and skills)
* location (remoteness, communications and known or anticipated environmental conditions).

As staff are responsible for student safety at all times, even when students may be out of sight, it is important that students are adequately skilled to undertake the activity. In the early stages of learning, it may be necessary to have roving staff and, at times, staff stationed at some control sites.

Reasons for increasing staff allocations must be documented.

The following table shows the minimum staff-to-student allocation that must be used for orienteering activities.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **School grounds** | |
| Staff numbers | Student numbers |
| 1 | 1–30\* |
| 2 | 31–60 |
| Outdoor environments with well-defined boundaries | |
| Staff numbers | Student numbers |
| 2 | 1–40 |
| 3 | 41–60 |
| Outdoor environments with less defined boundaries | |
| Staff numbers | Student numbers |
| 2 | 1–20 |
| 3 | 21–30 |

\*This is the only activity that allows one teacher to supervise students as it is being offered in the school grounds.

The teacher in charge is responsible for the supervision strategy, which must be endorsed by the school principal as part of the excursion approval process. Staff members must supervise students according to that strategy, and in accordance with their duty of care. It is the role of the teacher in charge to clearly and adequately explain the supervision strategy to all participating staff members.

Students not directly participating in the activity must be separately supervised in line with Excursions Guidelines – Supervision.

## Peak bodies and expert advice

Orienteering Victoria <http://www.vicorienteering.asn.au/>

Orienteering Australia <http://orienteering.asn.au/>

Outdoors Victoria <https://outdoorsvictoria.org.au/>

Parks Victoria <http://www.parkweb.vic.gov.au/>

Victorian Rogaining Association <https://www.vra.rogaine.asn.au/>

For further enquiries, please contact [community.stakeholders@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:community.stakeholders@edumail.vic.gov.au)

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