ADVENTURE ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

# Sailing

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.

The following guidelines for sailing are for off-the-beach craft only.

Small, open off-the-beach sailing yachts include dinghies (monohulls) and catamarans (with two hulls). Off-the-beach craft are fitted with centreboards and require the skipper and/or crew to act as ballast. Separate guidelines have been developed for Windsurfing, Water Skiing, Canoeing, and Sea Kayaking.

Sailing activities require an emergency response plan which gives consideration to the:

* educational merits of the activity
* size, age and previous activity experience of the group
* skills and experience of the supervising staff
* prevailing, forecast and observed weather conditions
* availability of rescue vessels
* characteristics of the location.

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

## venue Definitions

[Transport Safety Victoria – Maritime Safety](https://transportsafety.vic.gov.au/maritime-safety) provides the following definitions of waterways in Victoria to provide guidance for minimum safety equipment and preparation:

**Inland waters** – rivers inside the seaward entrance, creeks, canals, lakes, reservoirs and any similar waters either naturally formed or man-made and which are either publicly or privately owned but does not include any navigable rivers, creeks or streams within declared port waters.

**Enclosed waters** – any declared port waters inside the seaward entrance. See [Victorian Recreational Boating Safety Handbook](http://transportsafety.vic.gov.au/maritime-safety/recreational-vessel-operators/powerboat/victorian-recreational-boating-safety-handbook) for all listed port waters.

**Coastal inshore waters** – include all beaches (bay and surf) with direct access to ocean waters, any beach exposed to ocean swell, and any beach that is exposed to currents, rips, strong winds or surf. This may include enclosed waterways at times with these features.

**Coastal offshore** – all waters greater than two nautical miles from the coast.

## 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 students’ current knowledge, skills and experience in sailing and in water environments (including their swimming abilities).

Students can be classified as either:

* **Beginner swimmers**

Students with little or no experience including in shallow water.

* **Intermediate swimmers**

Students with basic skills, able to swim 25 metres with a recognisable stroke.

* **Advanced swimmers**

Students able to swim fifty strokes using two recognisable strokes and to demonstrate one survival stroke in deep water.

Schools must consider the swimming competency of students in particular water environments when deciding on the venue, staff-student ratio, risk management plan and emergency response plan.

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

First time sailors and beginners must undertake lessons to receive instruction in basic skills taking into account factors such as activity area conditions, known or anticipated weather conditions, body of water and the progress of students.

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 control 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 must also include:

* the response of students in the event of a capsize or someone falling in
* principles of self-rescue
* communication and signals
* float and swimming methods.

## Equipment

All equipment used must be in sound condition, suitable for the activity and must meet applicable industry safety standards as listed below.

##### Sailing Craft

Each boat’s rigging and equipment should be thoroughly checked before it enters the water and must comply with the Australian Sailing standards for off-the-beach yachts. These checks should be documented. Each boat should include:

* a towing point
* a bailer (if not fitted with a self-bailing cockpit)
* sufficient hull buoyancy to float itself on an even keel when swamped and to support not less than 25 kg for each crew member (in the case of catamarans this figure applies to each hull)
* the facility to lower the mainsail with ease in both the upright and capsized position
* a mast that is completely sealed or drainable at its base.

##### Life Jackets

The wearing of a securely fitted Australian certified life jacket is required under Victorian marine safety law on all sailing craft that are underway on all Victorian waters. Students and staff must wear, as a minimum, a securely fitted Australian Standard Type 2 life jacket if sailing within two nautical miles of the coast, and an Australian Standard Type 1 life jacket if sailing more than two nautical miles from the coast. For more information, see [Life jacket laws](http://www.wearalifejacket.vic.gov.au/lifejacket-laws).

##### Helmets

Helmets may be provided to students participating in a sailing activity at the discretion of the instructor after consideration of students’ sailing experience, anticipated weather conditions, skill level or sail craft set up.

Helmets used must be specifically designed for water activities.

##### Safety craft

Rescue craft appropriate to the location and in good working condition must be readily available during any sailing activity for rescue and towing purposes.

Individuals in the rescue craft must wear an Australian Standard Type 1 lifejacket.

Powered rescue craft must comply with the minimum safety equipment listed in the Recreational Boating Safety Handbook, see: [Transport Safety Victoria](http://www.marinesafety.vic.gov.au/) – Maritime Safety.

## Clothing

Participants must dress in a manner that will not hinder flotation. For example, heavy boots or bulky clothing must not be worn. Waterproof jackets must not be over the top of a lifejacket.

A complete change of clothes should be available at the location.

## 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 sailing instructor/s must have one of the following:

* a current [Australia](http://www.yachting.org.au/)n Sailing Instructor Certificate
* Australian Sailing ‘Get Into Small Boat Sailing – Better Sailing’ level **and** have documented experience in sailing instruction
* equivalent documented training and experience to the Australian Sailing Instructor Certificate or the Australian Sailing ‘Get Into Small Boat Sailing – Better Sailing’ level.

The designated assistant to the instructor must:

* have experience in the activity at the level being offered to students
* be familiar with the requirements of the activity
* 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 on the safety requirements of this role.

The staff member responsible for the rescue craft (which must be present at the activity) must hold a Marine Licence. For more information see: [Transport Safety Victoria - Marine Licence](https://transportsafety.vic.gov.au/maritime-safety/recreational-vessel-operators/powerboat/licensing).

 [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 environmental conditions).

Reasons for increasing staff allocations must be documented.

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

|  |
| --- |
| **Inland and enclosed waters** |
| Staff numbers | Student numbers |
| 2 | Up to 17 |
| 3 | 18–24 |
| **Coastal waters** |
| Staff numbers  | Student numbers  |
| 2 | Up to 12 |
| 3 | 13–18 |
| 4 | 19–24 |

The Department recommends the following ratio in relation to safety craft:

|  |
| --- |
| Safety craft ratio |
| Participant vessels  | Safety vessels  |
| 2 | 1 |

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

Australian Sailing <https://www.sailing.org.au/home/>

Transport Safety Victoria – Maritime Safety <https://transportsafety.vic.gov.au/maritime-safety>

Royal Life Saving Australia – Australia Bronze Medallion <https://www.royallifesaving.com.au/training/bronze-medallion>

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

Surf Life Saving Australia – BeachSafe <https://beachsafe.org.au/>

For further enquiries, please contact community.stakeholders@edumail.vic.gov.au

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