ADVENTURE ACTIVITY GUIDELINES

# Windsurfing

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.

Windsurfing (referred to previously as sailboarding) is a unique activity allowing participants to travel on a small board powered by the action of wind on a single sail connected to the board by a flexible joint.

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

## 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.

Where possible, programs taking place at coastal waterways should be conducted at patrolled beaches. Staff may find [Beachsafe.org.au](https://beachsafe.org.au/) a useful reference when planning activities in coastal waterways.

## 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

Windsurfing requires a reasonable degree of physical strength and may not be suitable for all students. Planning for activities should begin with an assessment of each student’s current knowledge, skills, physical strength, experience in windsurfing 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 50 to 100 metres using two recognisable strokes and to demonstrate one survival stroke in deep water.

Schools must consider the swimming competency of students in particular 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 [[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, Pre-requisite Skills/Knowledge​ ​ (doc - 139kb)](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/safety/participrep.doc).

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

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 reasonably 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.

## Equipment

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

##### Boards

Large, wide, buoyant and laterally stable sailboards, with good traction for the feet, are suitable for beginners. The designated instructor should ensure beginners’ boards should have the foot straps removed.

A range of sail sizes is useful. Small, light students learn more easily with a small sail.

Boards should:

* be fitted with a towing eye or fitting with an internal diameter of not less than 38 mm, or, if this is not practical towing should be accomplished by passing a line through the centre case or around the mast step
* be fitted with a friction device to maintain the centreboard in the case or a line to attach the centreboard to the hull
* be rigged so that for towing or self-rescue each standing rig should be capable of being stowed and secured in a compact manner longitudinally on the hull. The windsurfer must be unimpeded while controlling the board under tow, or while paddling in the prone position.

A repair tool kit appropriate for the sailboards being used should be available at the venue.

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##### Harness

The use of any form of seat harness is not recommended until students can sail confidently. When harnesses are not being used, harness lines must be removed.

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##### Helmets

All first-time participants and beginners must use helmet – because the risk of injury is greater for those students that the more experienced students. Helmets may be provided to students participating in windsurfing activities at the discretion of the instructor after consideration of students’ experience and skill level.

Helmets used must be specifically designed for water activities.

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##### Lifejackets

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

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##### Safety craft

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

Individuals in the rescue craft must wear an Australian Standard Type 1 personal flotation device. Powered rescue craft must comply with the minimum safety equipment listed in the Recreational Boating Safety Handbook, see: [Transport Safety Victoria](http://www.transportsafety.vic.gov.au/home).

## Clothing

Participants must dress in a manner that will not hinder flotation. For example, heavy boots or bulky clothing must not be worn, nor a waterproof jacket over the top of a personal flotation device.

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 windsurfing instructor/s must have one of the following:

* Windsurfing Instructor certificate from Australian Sailing, see [Australian Sailing – Windsurfing Instructor](https://www.sailing.org.au/course-finder/33/)
* equivalent documented training and experience from another training provider or education institution
* equivalent documented experience in lieu of certification/accreditation.

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).

At least one staff member must hold, as a minimum, a current first aid qualification, a current Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) qualification and have a first aid kit applicable to their level of training.

 [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 responsibility for activity instruction and the other able 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 student-to-staff allocation that must be used for windsurfing activities.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Supervision ratios - All waters** | |
| Staff numbers | Student numbers |
| 2 | Up to 12 |
| 3 | 13–18 |
| 4 | 19–24 |

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>

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

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

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

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

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