

Holloways Beach Environmental Education Centre

Curriculum Activity Risk Assessment

Activity Details

CARA Creation Date: 29-Jan-2026			
Activity:	Climbing and abseiling (natural surfaces)		
Activity Scope:	<p>Guideline review date: 24 September 2025</p> <p>This guideline demonstrates the minimum safety standard for student participation in climbing and/or abseiling in natural environments with specialised equipment and ropes, as an activity to support curriculum delivery. This includes single-pitch and multi-pitch top rope climbing and abseiling activities.</p> <p>Note: Students must not participate in lead climbing in this environment.</p> <p>The Department of Education is committed to ensuring that curriculum activities are planned for and managed in accordance with the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld), to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of students, staff and others.</p> <p>Depending on the scope of this activity, other risk assessments may be required when planning. Curriculum activities encompassing more than one CARA guideline (e.g. challenge low ropes and group activities while camping) must comply with the requirements of all CARA guidelines appropriate to the activity.</p> <p>Schools should consider conducting this activity at a Department of Education Outdoor and Environmental Education Centre (OEEC) and consult with OEEC centre staff for risk assessment requirements.</p> <p>For activities conducted at a non-Department of Education venue, and/or when engaging external expertise, request written risk assessment advice and attach it to this CARA record.</p> <p>For activities conducted off-site, schools must comply with the school excursions procedure.</p>		
Guidelines:	https://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/stages-of-schooling/CARA/activity-guidelines/climbing-abseiling-natural-surfaces		
Activity Description:			
Inherent Risk Level:	High		
Inherent Risk Level Description:	Single pitch rock climbing, but not lead climbing. Refer to Glossary for further information.		
Start Date:	Thursday, 29 January, 2026	End Date:	Thursday, 28 January, 2027
On School Grounds:	No	Is parental permission required for this activity?	Yes

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Activity Requirements	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A registered teacher must be appointed to maintain overall responsibility for the activity. • Teachers, in collaboration with other adult supervisors of the planned activity, determine additional risks, hazards and control measures relevant to the activity and the specific school/group circumstances in order to lift the safety standard above the minimum identified in the CARA guideline. • Consult review comments from previous CARA records to improve safety standards based on the advice from the previous supervisors of the activity at the school. • Prior consultation is required with local authority (e.g. Department of Environment, Tourism, Science and Innovation [for track closures] and Queensland Fire Department for local advice, emergency support mechanisms and additional supervision requirements to ensure participant and public safety. • Reference to Australian adventure activity standard and abseiling and climbing Australian adventure activity good practice guide is required when planning this activity. • Permission/permits are required to be obtained from land managers (e.g. QGPF, local councils or private landholders), if applicable. • Assessment and management of risks associated with working at heights must occur. • Routine visual checks to be carried out by a competent person before each use of the natural surface to ensure the site is safe and the integrity of the safety systems. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools must consider age, maturity and skill level of students when planning curriculum activities. Adjustments are required for students with disability to support access and participation in the curriculum. Consult with the parents/carers of students with disability, or when appropriate the student, to ensure risks related to their child's participation in the activity are identified and managed. • Schools must consult current student medical information and/or health plans in accordance with the managing students' health support needs at school procedure. Record information about any student condition (e.g. physical or medical, such as epilepsy) that may inhibit safe engagement in the activity and include specific support measures within emergency procedures. • For activities with students with a medical condition or disability that may impact on safety during the activity, consultation with parents is required prior to allocating supervision to determine the impact of students' medical condition or disability on safety during the activity. • For participants with known allergies, schools must comply with the supporting students with asthma and/or at risk of anaphylaxis at school procedure and the school's anaphylaxis risk management plan, including an adult supervisor of the activity with anaphylaxis training. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Emergency and first-aid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency plans and injury management procedures must be established for foreseeable incidents (e.g. medical emergency, equipment failure, thunderstorm, provision of first aid) and incorporate the advice from local authorities. • Adult supervisors must have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ emergency contact details of all participants ◦ a medical alert list and a process for administering student medication ◦ communication equipment suitable to conditions (e.g. two-way radio, mobile phone) and a process for obtaining external assistance and/or receiving emergency advice. Note that battery life can be impacted by weather conditions ◦ recovery/rescue equipment suitable to the location (e.g. emergency position-indicating radio beacon [EPIRB] or personal locator beacon [PLB], flares) ◦ an appointed emergency contact (e.g. the Principal, a park ranger, or local police) who is provided with a route card listing activity details (outline of the route to be followed, the number and names of the party, the estimated time of departure/arrival) ◦ emergency shelter/protection locations and alternative routes that consider foreseeable emergencies (e.g. injury, bushfire, thunderstorm, extreme temperature, tides). • Safety procedures must be determined for the location (e.g. safe use of equipment, location of first aid support and equipment) and incorporate advice from off-site facility, if relevant. • Access is required to first aid equipment and consumables suitable for foreseeable incidents. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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<p>Induction and instruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Induction is required for all adult supervisors on emergency procedures (e.g. equipment failure) and safety procedures (e.g. safe use of equipment). If the activity is conducted at an off-site facility, induction is to be informed by advice provided in consultation with expertise at the venue.• Instruction is required for students and adult supervisors on correct techniques (e.g. abseiling/rappelling and climbing techniques and methods, safe use of equipment). Rule-reminders are to be provided throughout the activity.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Consent</p> <p>Parent consent is required for all activities conducted off-site and all extreme risk level activities conducted onsite. It is strongly recommended that parent consent is obtained for high risk level activities conducted on-site.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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Risk Management Details

Supervision	
Principals, in consultation with the qualified adults, make final supervision decisions for the activity that considers the local context.	
<p>Appropriate adult supervision must be provided to manage the activity safely i.e. prevent an incident from occurring and manage an incident if one were to occur, including managing emergency situations. The principal must give active consideration to the minimum standards set in the CARA guideline for the activity, the CARA planner and the risk assessment when determining the appropriate level of supervision.</p> <p><i>See Number of adult supervisors (below).</i></p> <p>Participants must adhere to all rules and advice communicated by the facility operator/owner and any safety signage at the facility/location.</p> <p>Before the activity, all adult supervisors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • must be familiar with the contents of the CARA record, including the Emergency and Supervision Plans. <p>During the activity, all adult supervisors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • must provide active and direct supervision – be constantly vigilant, attentive and rescue ready, • must remove participants for the safety of the group or individuals, if applicable • must comply with control measures from the CARA record and adapt as hazards arise • must not rely on students to recover a person in difficulty at any time. <p>The activity must be suspended if the conditions become unfavourable (e.g. thunderstorms).</p> <p>Number of adult supervisors</p> <p>Principals, in consultation with the qualified adults of the activity, determine the final number of supervisors to fulfil instructional, emergency and supervision roles for the local context that consider the nature of the activity (climbing/abseiling elements, belay system (top managed, bottom managed or autobelay), students' ages, abilities and specialised learning, access and/or health needs. In some instances, the final supervision ratio may be 1:1. The abseiling and climbing Australian adventure activity good practice guide should be consulted for supervision ratios.</p> <p>At least two adult supervisors, one of whom is a registered teacher must be present. In certain situations, there may need to be smaller or larger numbers of participants per adult supervisor.</p> <p>Due to the risk associated with falls from height, the safe conduct of these activities requires the use of spotters in order to protect the participant's upper body and head from heavy contact with the ground. Spotters are required when the feet of the participant are up to 1.8m above the ground (e.g. lead climbing activities before first clip) (AS 2316.1-2009).</p> <p>If the minimum safety standard cannot be met, modify the activity (or elements of it) and use the hierarchy of controls to implement alternative control measures to meet or exceed the minimum safety standard (e.g. reduce the number of students participating at any one time).</p> <p>*See FAQ's for further support.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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Supervisor Qualifications	
Qualifications support the minimum safety standard for this activity. Principals make final decisions* in determining supervisor capability (competence, relevance and currency) and whether the activity leader meets an appropriate teaching standard. * See FAQ's for further support.	
All adult supervisors must comply with the working with children authority—blue cards procedure.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Qualified adults for the activity Recovery/emergency – CPR, First aid, Rescue	
An adult with current emergency qualifications is required to be quickly accessible to the activity area. Emergency qualifications include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HLTAID009 Provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) • HLTAID010 Provide basic emergency life support • HLTAID011 Provide first aid • HLTAID013 Provide first aid in remote situations • or equivalent competencies. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
An adult with concussion management knowledge or training is recommended. Consult Concussion in sport resources.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
At least one adult supervisor is:	
a registered teacher with competence (knowledge and skills) and experience in climbing and abseiling, with a statement of attainment from a RTO covering relevant climbing and abseiling activities from the sport, fitness and recreation training package or similar. or	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
an adult supervisor, working under the direct supervision of a registered teacher, with competence (knowledge and skills) and experience in climbing and abseiling and with Certificate III in outdoor leadership or Certificate III in sport, aquatics and recreation , similar or higher (e.g. statements of attainment which must include the endorsements of climbing and abseiling).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Refer to the competencies outlined in the abseiling and climbing Australian adventure activity good practice guide for guidance. *See FAQ's for further support.	

Facilities and Equipment	
Vehicle access must be available at all times.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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Inspection of staging and climbing areas must occur immediately prior to the activity.	☑
Base of climbs/abseils must be cleared of potential hazards.	☑
All equipment (e.g. ropes, harnesses, slings, carabiners and chocks) manufactured specifically for rock climbing /abseiling and must comply with the Australian Standards AS 2316.1-2009 for use and maintenance and international climbing and mountaineering federation specifications.	☑
Equipment must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sized to match the ability and strength of students • used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions • manufactured for use in the context of the activity and meet the relevant EN, UIAA/CE or Australian Standard. 	☑
Abseiling/rappelling rope long enough for the descent and a top-rope safety rope used in addition to the abseiling/rappelling rope.	☑
Harnesses, helmets, ropes and lanyards must be provided for all participants and must meet UIAA safety standards , EN358, EN361, EN813, EN12277, AS/NZS1891.4 or equivalent.	☑
Harnesses must be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • worn at all times and fitted correctly when on course, and connected by a safety line (rope or webbing/tape) to an appropriate anchor point or belay • connected by a safety line (rope or tape) to an appropriate anchor point or belay where exposure to a fall exists. 	☑
Helmets that meet UIAA or EN12492 standards must provide appropriate for protection from falling objects be correctly fitted and secured for the duration of the activity.	☑
The belay system or lanyard arrangement to be appropriate for the expected fall factor of a climber to minimise risk of strangulation.	☑
Appropriate vertical rescue equipment suitable for unassisted abseil, and/or haul and lower rescue techniques must be readily accessible.	☑
Participants to wear: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clothing appropriate for the activity and weather conditions; and • firmly fitting, enclosed non-slip footwear appropriate to the terrain. 	☑

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Consider using backpacks to carry equipment and edge protectors to protect ropes from abrasion damage.	☑
Establish and employ a process for checking for damage for all equipment used in the activity.	☑
A log of equipment use, maintenance and inspection for each course must be kept and made available to participating schools upon request.	☑
A retirement schedule must be developed to replace equipment by manufacturers' nominated expiry date or when significant wear causes a hazard.	☑
Refer to the equipment requirements outlined in the abseiling and climbing Australian adventure activity good practice guide for guidance.	☑

Hazards and Control Measures

Environmental hazards	
<p>Environmental conditions - Weather, Surfaces, Surrounds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess weather conditions prior to undertaking the activity, inspecting the intended location in order to identify variable risks, hazards and potential dangers. Follow the school's sun safety policy, including appropriate clothing, sun protection (e.g. sunscreen) and shade facilities when outside. Follow the managing excessive heat in schools guidelines when participating in very hot or extreme heat conditions. Monitor participants for cold related illness (e.g. hypothermia) in cold weather conditions. Note: sudden temperature changes may trigger seizures. 	☑
Facilities and equipment hazards	
<p>Activity location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess site for unstable rocks, dead tree limbs, harmful fauna and flora. Location must be suitable for the activity being undertaken to ensure safe participation and that safety rules and procedures can be followed. Undertake a reconnaissance of new or infrequently used venues to ascertain suitability. 	☑
<p>Faulty or dangerous equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove any equipment from the activity area that poses a risk to participants. Ensure all safety equipment is in place and in good condition. 	☑
Student considerations	
<p>Injury</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students aware of the location of emergency and first-aid equipment. 	☑

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<p>Physical exertion - Exhaustion and fatigue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct warm-up/cool-down activities. • Monitor students for signs of fear, hesitancy, loss of balance, fatigue, disorientation and/or exhaustion. • Ensure drink breaks occur regularly. Make water available for individual participants between drink breaks. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Student considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct appropriate lead-up activities (e.g. trust, cooperation, communication). • Provide suitable options to allow 'challenge by choice'. • Provide scaffolded experiences to build participant skill level, knowledge and experience. • Adopt a system of signals to clearly communicate the need for assistance if in difficulty. • Remove accessories (e.g. jewellery) before participating. • Ensure fingernails, hair and clothing do not pose a hazard. • Guide students through an activity or provide a demonstration prior to undertaking the activity. • Brief all participants on basic first aid procedures for biological hazards they may encounter (e.g. snakes, ticks, leeches). • Implement procedures (e.g. buddy system, roll marking mechanisms) to account for all participants before, during and after the activity. 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Visibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students wear easily identifiable clothing (e.g. high clothing). • Ensure staff can easily recognise those students with health support needs and are familiar with their needs 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Glossary</p> <p>Abseiling: descending vertical or near vertical natural surfaces or artificial surfaces using ropes and descending friction devices to manage the descent. It is also known as rappelling.</p> <p>Belaying: refers to a variety of techniques used in climbing to exert friction on a climbing rope so that a falling climber does not fall very far.</p> <p>Climbing: ascending, traversing or descending vertical or near vertical natural surfaces or artificial surfaces. (Also see rock climbing).</p> <p>Multi-pitch: a section of a natural surface or artificial surface that to ascend, traverse or descend, progress is made by using more than one pitch and establishing belay systems mid route.</p> <p>Rock climbing: ascending, traversing or descending vertical or near vertical natural surfaces. At times also used to describe climbing on artificial surfaces. (Also see climbing.)</p> <p>Single-pitch: a section of a natural surface or artificial surface that requires no greater than one length of rope to ascend, traverse or descend.</p> <p>Additional links</p> <p>Sport Climbing Australia</p> <p>Australian Climbing Association Queensland</p>	

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Staff/Other Participants			
Family Name	Given Name	Type	Other Participants Role
Cunningham	Meredith	Staff Member	N/A
Francis	Timothy	Staff Member	N/A
Hamllyn	Sarah	Staff Member	N/A
Milne	Lance	Staff Member	N/A
Mulqueen	Terri	Staff Member	N/A
Perham	Phil	Staff Member	N/A
Rohan	Cindy	Staff Member	N/A
Seed	Stephanie	Staff Member	N/A
Woolcock	John	Staff Member	N/A

Approval Details

Approval Status: Draft			
Approval Officer Name:		Approval Date:	

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Planning Considerations

Which students will be involved?

- Consider the number of students, size of student groups and students' capabilities e.g. age, experience, competence, fitness, maturity.
- Consider any individual student needs e.g. personalised learning, support provisions (including behaviour support plans), health management (including health plans and prescribed medication requirements).

Where will the students be?

- Consider the location of the activity e.g. remote/easily accessible, public /private, school/classroom/workshop/other.
- Is the number of students appropriate for the available space?
- If outdoors – sunsafe strategies are implemented; weather and environmental conditions are assessed before and during activity (e.g. temperature, storms, water currents, tides); and strategies to reduce the likelihood of viruses, allergies and skin infections caused by insects (e.g. ticks, mosquitoes, spiders) and other animals are applied.
- The site is checked for hazards (e.g. poisonous plants, dangerous animals, uneven terrain, barbed wire,) and necessary controls implemented.
- Activities are appropriately situated in relation to buildings, pedestrians, members of the public, vehicles and other activities e.g. designated areas for activity, spectators and vehicles are established.

What will the students be doing?

- Consider the nature and duration of the activity i.e. need for drinking water, food, rest, appropriate clothing, warm-up and warm-down.
- Instruction in rules and pre-requisite skills is provided.
- Student skills are developed in a progressive and sequential manner.
- First aid and emergency medical treatment provisions are appropriate for the type of activity and location e.g. first aid kit, first aid trained personnel, Ventolin®, Epipen®, and students' personal prescribed medications as required in health plans are available.
- Emergency response strategies are in place e.g. communication plans (e.g. mobile phone, walkie talkie), safety induction, evacuation plans.
- Hair, clothing, footwear and jewellery are worn in a manner that is appropriate and safe for the activity.
- Personal items, e.g. drink bottles, towels and mouthguards, will not be shared between students.

What will the students be using?

- Instruction in safety procedures and safe handling of equipment is provided.
- Equipment is suitable for the activity, properly maintained, appropriately used and complies with the relevant safety standard.
- [Relevant department procedures and guidelines](#) are adhered to for the use of equipment and work processes.

Who will be leading the activity?

- A registered teacher has overall responsibility for the activity.
- Sufficient adult supervision is in place to manage the activity safely (including in emergency situations).
- The activity leader has the competence (knowledge and skills) to plan, induct, instruct and manage the activity safely for students and others.
- There are sufficient adults present with current First Aid qualifications (including CPR) or ready access to qualified first aid personnel.
- Blue Card requirements are adhered to for leaders/volunteers.

I have incorporated the above factors when planning my risk management strategies for this activity.

Additional activity-specific requirements for students with specialised learning needs are provided in the Other Details box below.