

SEEDS

Bushland Restoration &  
Environmental Education



# **RISK MANAGEMENT MANUAL**

## **Working with Children**

V.1 May 2009

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# 1. Introduction

SEEDS Bushland Restoration & Environmental Education has put together this Risk Management Manual to provide all employees, parents and teachers with information about occupational health and safety policy and procedures when working with children. It also outlines the duties of SEEDS as a service provider together with the duties of the parents and teachers utilizing our services

## 2.1 Safety Policy

Learning in an environmental setting can be highly enjoyable experience, but we recognise that this setting can be an unpredictable and sometimes hazardous one, by its very nature.

The safety of our students is of the utmost importance at all times. We recognise that there are inherent risks and dangers that an unpredictable environment can present at times and we take all due to care to identify and minimise these risks.

We endeavour to take the necessary precautions to eliminate the risks, where possible. Where this is not possible, we endeavour to minimise the risks that children are exposed and minimise the potential impacts to our students.

Our goal is to provide an environment that is safe for all students, yet gives them the freedom to explore and learn in an environmental setting.

## 2.2 Risks and Potential Hazards of Environmental Teaching

There are many hazards to students that can present themselves during the course of an outdoor lesson. Many factors that can potentially impact on the safety of children must be considered before a lesson can be undertaken. Environmental factors such as –

- Adverse weather conditions – Weather conditions can impact on the safety of children in many ways from heat and sun exposure to the impacts of cold and poor weather.
- Potential physical hazards such as tripping hazards and unstable surfaces

- Wild animals and the hazards that they can present to children

This list is not exhaustive of ALL hazards that will be presented by an environmental setting.

To eliminate or minimise the risks that children will be exposed to, we have outlined Safety Procedures followed by SEEDS staff overleaf.

## 3 Safety Procedures

### 3.1 Hazard Identification by SEEDS Staff

Before the commencement of any activity or lesson, the proposed environment / site will be assessed by trained SEEDS staff for –

- Potential physical Hazards that may cause injuries. For example, tripping hazards, unstable ground, poor conditions of paths / trails will be assessed for suitability
- Any potential falling tree limbs / rocks will be identified and avoided by the group
- Weather Conditions and suitability of activities
- Any Dangerous animals that we may encounter
- Any other hazard / risk as identified by SEEDS staff
- Risk Management strategies to be implemented to eliminate or minimise these risks
- First Aid precautions / requirements that will be implemented in the unlikely event of injury

The potential hazards associated with any site will be listed on a Site Safety Analysis Report for parents to read. We will be open to any questions / queries that parents may have concerning these hazards.

### 3.2 First Aid

ALL SEEDS staff will be trained in First Aid (Level 2). A fully stocked First Aid Kit will be carried AT ALL TIMES by staff. Staff will also carry appropriate communications equipment AT ALL TIMES to ensure that the group is never isolated from emergency assistance.

### 3.3 Footwear / Clothing Requirements

Students will be required to wear sturdy footwear that is suitable for each activity. For example, for a nature walk, students will be expected to wear, at the very least, sandals or runners or preferably sturdy hiking boots. THONGS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO BE WORN AT ANY TIME. Footwear will be judged by SEEDS staff and students may be asked to change their footwear if staff are unsatisfied with a student's choice of footwear.

Students will also required to wear sensible clothing that is appropriate for the activity and weather conditions (see below). For example, on Nature walks, students will be required to wear long pants to minimise injuries and abrasions (dependent on weather conditions).

### 3.4 Weather Exposure / SunSmart Requirements

Weather conditions will be assessed by our trained staff before the commencement of each activity. In the event of activities being cancelled due to weather, suitable notice will be given to parents to notify them of the situations where the planned activity cannot proceed. In this event, an indoor activity / lesson may replace the planned outdoor lesson.

Children will be expected to wear suitable clothing to suit the weather conditions for each activity / lesson. This will lessen the impact that adverse weather conditions will have on our students.

#### For Poor / Cold Weather -

We expect that children will wear a suitable jacket, long pants and sturdy footwear. Beanies, gloves and scarves may be required.

#### For Hot Weather –

Children we be expected to follow SunSmart guidelines, e.g. wear a broad-brimmed hat, a light, long sleeve shirt and sunscreen (to be provided by SEEDS?).

### 3.5 Outdoor Education Instructions and Safety Briefings

Children will be given a Safety Briefing at the beginning of each lesson. These briefing will outline –

- The hazards presented by each specific site
- The expected behaviour of students whilst under the supervision of SEEDS staff
- Any possible dangerous wild animals that we may encounter
- The effects of weather on children
- The procedure to follow in the unlikely event of any injuries being sustained

Children will be expected to follow the instructions outlined in the Safety Briefing for their own safety and that of the entire group.

### 3.6 Allergies

We ask parents to inform SEEDS staff of any allergies that children may have in relation to wildlife BEFORE any activity / lesson takes place, e.g. any hayfever allergies, allergic reactions caused by bee stings. In the event that children rely medication for these allergies, these will be supplied by the parent and SEEDS takes no responsibility for the use (or misuse) of these medications by children. This remains the sole responsibility of parents if they choose to supply their children with medication.

Epi-Pens will be used by trained SEEDS staff if required, but staff WILL NOT be qualified to administer any other medications.

We will expect that parents will notify SEEDS staff of any food allergies that students may have BEFORE attending any activity. We also insist that food will not be shared amongst students at any time.

### 3.7 Behaviour Management of Students

During activities / lessons, we expect that students will follow ALL directions of SEEDS staff at ALL TIMES. These directions will be given for the safety of individuals, as well as that of the entire group, and SEEDS staff will ensure that ALL students understand why this is required and the importance of acting in an appropriate manner.

Students that do not follow these directions will be disciplined and may be expected to leave the group. For example, in the first instance, students will be warned if they are not following the safety directions and behaviour expectations of SEEDS staff. If the situation persists, students may be asked to have a "time out" session and may only rejoin the group when SEEDS staff are satisfied that these students will no longer be a threat to their own safety and that of the group.

In severe cases, i.e. after the third warning, the student(s) will be asked to leave the activity and not return for the remainder of the session. In these cases, students may be asked to complete a "contract of behaviour" where students will write out what is expected of them and sign and date this document. These records will kept on file and referred to in future instances of misbehaviour.

### 3.8 Dangerous Animals

SEEDS staff will brief children on the dangerous animals that are likely to be encountered whilst in the field BEFORE the activity takes place. In the unlikely event that the group encounters a dangerous animal, SEEDS staff will outline the expected safe behaviour to children. Children will be expected to follow these guidelines to ensure their own safety and that of the group.

If an injury is sustained by a child due to a dangerous animal, First Aid Kits will be on hand to minimise the severity of such a situation.

### 3.9 Incident Reporting

In the unlikely event of any incident or injury is sustained by a child, SEEDS staff will complete an Incident Report detailing the entire incident, any injuries that were sustained and any Safety or Risk Management procedures undertaken by SEEDS staff to manage the situation.

A copy of this document will be provided to parents to ensure their complete satisfaction with the resolution of the situation. These documents will be also be kept as a record for SEEDS.



