

# Our Safety Systems for Education Outside The Classroom (EOTC)



## 1. How the expected learning outcomes of the activities will be met

We are an outdoor education centre, not an outdoor activity centre, so the planning process at Hillary Outdoors begins by finding out what the Learning Objectives (LOs) are for your students. These should be communicated at the time of booking. If you prefer Hillary Outdoors to plan the content of your week, then those LOs will either link to the National Curriculum standards (PE and Health, Outdoor Education) or to our Self, Place, Others, Thinking & Skills (SPOTS) themes. Many schools elect to follow Unit Standards and/or Achievement Standards – if this is the case, the primary LOs for the week are usually set by those Standards (although our SPOTS themes will still form a strong part of the outcomes). The LOs for the week constitute the planning done by all our staff to ensure we deliver the right focus for your programme. Each group has a lead instructor who will facilitate the group through all parts of the programme; ensuring learning is structured appropriately throughout the week.

## 2. Safety Management System

Implementation of our 3-Tier Safety Management System (SMS).

## 3. Incident recording procedures

Hillary Outdoors has always had robust process to record all incidents and near misses. We are constantly reviewing our operation to ensure we gather information and learn from the information we generate. All incidents are reviewed internally and any incidents which we believe are significant are reviewed by our external Safety Advisory Committee. From their response and guidance, improvements to our practice may be recommended.

## 4. Continual monitoring of safety

This is core to our practice and training at Hillary Outdoors. The SMS is a living process – things change on a regular basis and each Tier of the SMS is reviewed on a 12 monthly basis. Many AMPs are subject to minor improvements on a much more frequent cycle. Every member of staff is made aware of any change or amendment to detail through the Centre Manager, the Safety manager, the Duty Manager and/or the Daily staff meetings prior to starting work each day.

All Hillary Outdoors staff are trained and assessed in their ability to actively manage risk in a variety of situations and environments. Training occurs at induction and continues throughout their career with Hillary Outdoors. All our Instructors have relevant and current skills, first aid certificates and appropriate driving licences. Changing conditions during the day are monitored by our Duty Manager as well as by instructors in the field. Activities are cancelled, or adapted and contingency plans put into place if necessary. We are proud of our standards of safety. If there is any aspect of the above information on which you require greater detail – please do ask us and we will be happy to provide it.

## 5. Staff selection

Instructors are selected based on their previous training and experience with an expectation that they will already have a great deal of the experience needed to acquire a range of competencies. Many staff will have completed a 2-year training course in outdoor education (often at Hillary Outdoors) and have several years of experience in the outdoor industry before joining the Hillary Outdoors team. We pride ourselves on our rigorous selection process.

## 6. Training and assessment standards

Hillary Outdoors meets training standards which comply with nationally accepted best practice standards. Our internal training (covering aspects from educational developments to activity specific training, mentoring, co-instructing and buddy observations) focuses on further developing staff expertise and skills. Our Instructors are encouraged to gain New Zealand Outdoor Instructors Association (NZOIA) professional qualifications as they progress in their careers.

## 7. Supervision structures including ratios

Our maximum ratio is one instructor to ten students (1:10), with up to 2 accompanying adults. For some activities the number of participants under the care of an instructor is decreased to ensure the safety of our clients. A school teacher may be considered as an additional pair of eyes, however here at Hillary Outdoors we do not factor in the teacher as a 'group leader' when considering our safety ratios, with the occasional exception on long programmes (two weeks or more). Each activity is considered on merit – please rest assured the safety of our clients (and staff) is paramount to our business. However, it is important that you let us know of any participant who presents as a high risk, such as a student with behavioural challenges, so that all variables can be addressed appropriately. We are always happy to discuss ratios for any higher risk activities (or students) which your school requests at the time of booking.

While Hillary Outdoors takes full responsibility for your students' safety during activity times, we hope that teachers & supporting adults choose to participate in our activities, you do know your students best! Generally, we will ask teachers to be 'silent/cooperative supporters' as it is important your students look to their Instructor for guidance during practical activities.

Between 5pm and 8.45am (with the exception of overnight expeditions away from the Centre), the school (Teacher i/c) is responsible for the care of the students – & the same ratio of 1:10 is a good guideline to work to. Our staff support this by running evening activities and additional back up is available in the form of a Duty Manager. Accompanying adults will be provided with a handbook which outlines their responsibilities including what to do in an emergency. We may also ask you or your other staff member(s) to take responsibility for any students who are unable to take part in the programme on a particular day, for example due to sickness.

## 8. Support of students, Facilities, Catering, Equipment and Vehicles

Our equipment and facilities are of an excellent standard. They are inspected regularly and continually improved. Our systems are regularly checked for compliance and appropriateness.

- We are proud to have been awarded AdventureMark status and as a part of this a safety audit is carried out every three years. We also have a rolling schedule of internal and external activity reviews.
- All structures and critical equipment have scheduled inspections
- All of our vehicles have current Warrants of Fitness (or Certificate of Fitness)

- All of our buildings meet required standards and are checked regularly against our maintenance schedule
- All gear and equipment used is logged and inspected regularly. We have a full time Resource Officer in charge of our outdoor equipment at Hillary Outdoors Tongariro.
- Our kitchens are audited by the New Zealand Food Safety Authority

All safety equipment required for your programme is supplied by Hillary Outdoors unless otherwise discussed. Students are provided with a list of equipment and clothing they need to bring in their Student Information Booklet. In addition to this we have an extensive collection of personal clothing and equipment which we lend to students who do not have their own, or what they bring is inappropriate/inadequate.

At Hillary Outdoors Tongariro, our Youth Development Centre and two of our Chalets are wheelchair accessible. At GBI wheelchair disabilities are catered for in specifically converted, ground floor facilities. Hillary Outdoors has the capacity to provide a range of programmes for people with disabilities. Please discuss any students' special needs with us when you make your booking. Frequently we encounter students whose parents have withheld information on the medical/consent form feeling their child will be discriminated against – in fact the opposite is more commonly the case! Please encourage parents to fully share information – together we can do a great job. We have excellent facilities and systems in place to work well with a wide range of students regardless of their issues – dietary, behavioural, self-esteem related, etc.

It is the school's responsibility to ensure the participant medical/consent forms have been fully completed and signed. These must be given to the instructor in charge on arrival. Any participant without a signed form will not be allowed to take part in activities. A large proportion of our incidents are the reoccurrence of pre-existing injuries, often undeclared on the medical forms. Please encourage parents to share all pre-existing conditions with us, however minor.

## 9. Emergency Procedures

All our staff are trained to use our crisis response system and are familiar with plans for high risk sites. Our systems have been developed in association with other agencies including the police. Please ensure your school has its own emergency procedures in place for your visit, including a 24 hour off site emergency contact number. This should be provided to Hillary Outdoors and the parents of attending students.

## 10. Referees

Please contact our Safety Manager, Luke Middleton [lukem@hillaryoutdoors.co.nz](mailto:lukem@hillaryoutdoors.co.nz) if you require an independent reference from another school.