

GBWCT POLICY



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SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR FIELD TRIPS

This policy sets out the key points staff should bear in mind when leading/escorting clients, students, and other children/young people on field-trips and overnight stays. As well as a checklist to help staff prepare properly and mitigate all risks, the policy also provides some guidelines for dealing with emergency situations.

1.0 Purpose

The Golden Bay Workcentre Trust (GBWCT) may offer its participants a range of opportunities to take part in activities off-site – i.e. field trips and/or overnight stays.

Many of these are not physically (or otherwise) challenging and/or do not pose any significant risk to students' safety. However, where activities are challenging and/or may pose risks to participant safety, GBWCT staff need to be adequately prepared for all eventualities. The following guidelines apply to trips of this nature.

2.0 Preparation

When an activity-based field trip is organised, students must be made aware of the level of fitness and ability that will be required. As students may have their first experience with certain activities in unfamiliar locations during the trip, involving participants in the decision making process and working together as a group will engender an atmosphere of trust and mutual support that enables students to accept new challenges.

Group leaders must give ample opportunity for students to express any concerns they might have, and ensure that students are not subject to criticism from their peers if they don't feel comfortable attending. Consistent role-modelling by tutors and respectful consideration of input from students is vital before, during and after the field trip.

Appropriate behaviour on the part of students must be fully discussed beforehand. Group leaders should outline behaviour that is helpful and that which threatens safety - and make the consequences of each clear. Mutually supportive and responsible team behaviour helps ensure safety, contains risks and provides encouragement during emergencies.

Physical safety must be promoted within the group by ensuring appropriate gear and equipment is carried by each person for themselves or on behalf of the group. Having

decided what gear is appropriate and available, if course participants turn up for an activity without it, they will not be permitted to take part.

Students under the age of 18 will be required to gain consent from a parent or guardian (see Parent Approval Form) before participation on a field trip or overnight stay.

In the case of MSD –funded services for youth clients the ratio of staff to participant will not exceed 1:5. There will be no overnight approved activities for MSD-funded services for youth clients.

3.0 Planning

GBWCT staff preparing for an overnight stay or outdoor recreation trip (e.g. tramping, kayaking, ropes course etc.) must complete the following checks before departing.

In the week before:

- Confirm booking for GBWCT vehicle/s and ensure there will be enough room for all passengers and gear
- Check all first aid and safety equipment you are taking on the trip and arrange for re-stocking if necessary
- Ensure all students have returned enrolment and consent forms
- Ensure all students have provided emergency contact information
- Distribute gear check-lists for students
- Complete RAMS forms and undertake a risk assessment of all activities and travel related to the trip
- Review procedures for what to do in the event of an accident/missing person/death
- Make copies of trip itinerary, intended route, student consent/emergency contact forms and key contact numbers and leave with the GBWCT Manager
- Confirm arrangements with third parties (e.g. D.O.C, external tutors etc.)

On the day of departure:

- Check GBWCT vehicle before departure
- Ensure First Aid kit is in vehicle
- Check cell-phone battery is charged and phone is in good working order. Take in-vehicle charger and/or spare batteries for emergencies
- Check the weather forecast for where you are going – remember that alpine forecasts will be more reliable for mountainous areas
- Check all students have correct gear, that it is properly labelled, and that all gear is loaded and secured
- Check for full list of emergency numbers

Safety Guidelines For Field Trips – Appendix

Loss of a Member

In the event of an emergency, everyone on the programme must be accounted for. It is essential to have a well-developed plan to respond quickly to a person missing on the site.

ON-SITE Procedures

1. Stay put, unless the environment is unstable or dangerous.
2. Question who saw the person last.
3. Was the missing person angry or depressed?
4. Did the missing person tell anyone of their plans?
5. Establish time and location missing person was last seen.
6. Check the area where the person was last seen. Check sign-out books.
7. Write down the times of search, on a report, as they happen.
8. Be specific with your search procedures to ensure that all staff are aware of their responsibilities. Know who is included in the search and who will stay put.
9. Be sensitive to the moods of participants. Conversations that take place can often prevent problems.
10. Other considerations:
 - Search method, with designated people.
 - Communication system to identify the found person.
 - At what time would notification of police take place?
 - At what time would parents be informed?

OFF-SITE Procedures

1. Keep group together
2. Establish last confirmed sighting of missing party
3. Assess risk factors
4. for group: weather, time of day, equipment carried, terrain, physical / emotional state
5. for missing party: weather, time of day, equipment carried, terrain, physical / emotional state
6. Carry out initial search from last known point using voice and whistles. Try to establish direction of travel of missing party and try not to destroy potential clues if larger search may be required
7. Ensure any search by group members is methodical and coordinated to ensure group stays together
8. Notify Golden Bay Workcentre Trust General Manager. If no response, notify Police that there may be a search and rescue alert. In high risk situations ensure the safety of the group and do not hesitate in alerting Workcentre or Police, time is critical. It is better to initiate a search and call it off than delay alerting the authorities. The decision to initiate a larger scale search will then be made by the NZ Land SAR Advisor.

9. Ensure a log is maintained of times and actions.