# High Ropes Course

**LOCATION:**

The high ropes course is 100 metres to the west of the director’s house.

**DESCRIPTION:**

The high ropes course is located in the forest and built utilizing some of the large eucalypts in the area. The area around the trees and under the activities has been cleared of the low vegetation to allow for easy access. Each activity is completed as a single activity. The participant climbs a ladder secured to a tree at one end of the chosen activity, onto staples attached to the tree and onto the activity. On completion the participant climbs back down the ladder to the ground.

**AIMS;**

1. To enable students to follow instructions and take on the responsibility for other students wellbeing and safety.
2. Students to work in a mature and cooperative manner in small groups to complete the course
3. For individual students able to tackle a new and challenging activity

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

1. Each student to fit: helmets, harnesses and learn to confidently belay each other.
2. For each student to feel confident and safe to tackle elements of the high ropes course
3. That students will positively support group members participating on the various activities

**AGE SUITABILITY:**

This activity is suitable for students from Year 7 upwards. For younger students and Special School students consider increased staff ratios.

**STAFF/STUDENT RATIO:**

## Ratios and training: 2:12 (AAS Challenge Ropes Course Oct 2009

This ratio in dependent on the following conditions: All participants are in view of the instructor and effective group management is maintained (For further information read the above AAS document)

This session is conducted with one Nayook staff and one trainee with up to 12 students, divided into four belay teams. Therefore there is a maximum of 4 students on the course at a time, with the remaining 8 involved in belaying. Each staff member supervises two belay teams of three students.

In the event of a group of 13 students, the thirteenth student will rotate into one belay team of 3 such that there are still only 4 students on the course and a maximum of 12 students actively involved in the activity at any one time.

**INSTRUCTOR EXPERIENCE:**

* The instructor would ideally have completed competency based units on conducting a Challenge Ropes Course and or have the relevant skills and experience.
* The instructor needs to have a clear understanding of the safety and emergency procedures for a potential emergency

**ASSISTANT EXPERIENCE:**

* The assistant/s needs to be familiar with the safety and emergency procedures and provide support for the instructor in an emergency
* The assistant must be able to help manage the group and take over if the instructor becomes incapacitated.

**PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE:**

* No previous experience is required however overweight, very unfit or students with coordination issues may struggle on some sections of the course. Students with concentration problems should be supervised very closely with belaying or not given the primary responsibility
* Participants need to responsibly follow safety procedures at all times.

**INSTRUCTOR RESPONSIBILITY:**

* For all staff and students generally
* Brief assistants/visiting staff on their role and the safety procedures.
* Complete checks of the course, attach ladders, rig the ropes and belay devices.
* Brief participants on suitable footwear, clothing, required skills and safety procedures.
* Instructing and supervising all participants

**ASSISTANT/VISITING TEACHER RESPONSIBILITY:**

* Assist the instructor where possible
* Monitor groups on the course
* Assist groups with training and practice
* Take over if the instructor becomes incapacitated

**PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITY:**

* To follow instruction as outlined in the safety brief and lesson outline
* To be responsible for the rogaining and safety equipment

**SAFETY, FIRST AID & ACTIVITY EQUIPMENT:**

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| First Aid Equipment | Safety Equipment | Activity Equipment |
| * First Aid kit * Student medication | * Hand radio * Rescue Kit (1 x 50m rope, 4 x figure eights, 1 x pulley, 6 x krabs, 4 x slings, 1 x set of EALS, 2 x set of lobster claws, 1 x bumbag with 4 x prussic loops, Stanley knife, pliers, rope knife and scissors.) | Set up equipment   * 5x static ropes * 10x belay devices * 12x karabiners * 6x slings * Full body harness   Student equipment   * Helmets (staff & students * Sit harness’s * Chest harness’s |

**PARTICIPANT CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT:**

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| --- | --- |
| Winter/Cold weather requirements | Summer/hot weather requirement |
| * WW Jackets * Overpants (if required) * Daypacks * Suitable footwear * Suitable clothing for the weather conditions * Water bottle * Snacks * Hair ties | * Clothing (suitable for high ropes course) * Suitable footwear * Daypacks * Water bottle * Snacks * Hair ties |

**SAFETY BRIEFING:**

* Students must stay at the activity for the session, let staff know if needing to leave for any reason
* Point out to students the “Out of Bounds” areas
* Review with students helmet and harness fitting, especially use of the chest harness
* Helmets and harnesses must remain on for the session, if removed for any reason have a Nayook staff member check once refitted
* Discuss the importance of the belayer and backup belayer 100% concentration is required at all times
* All groups must be checked by a staff member before accessing an element
* Discuss Sun smart policy
* No running; there are too many tripping/falling hazards in the area
* Do not interfere with any wildlife.
* In the warmer months be aware of the possibility of snakes.

**EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:**

* Deal with the incident or injury
* Access for vehicles to the area is a 4WD Track and may be difficult if evacuation is required a stretcher may be required. The stretcher is located in the equipment shed
* Send the assistant or use the handset to call for extra assistance from the main centre if required
* Contact the Director or the nominated emergency contact person (Note emergency call list in appendix).
* Call 000 (Police and/or ambulance as required)
* Call students school and parent if necessary

**NB** Mobile Phone Contact – at this site is marginal (or non existent?)

**ACTIVITY NOTES:**

The following is the suggested plan for the half day session on the rock climbing wall. If deviating from this then staff must notify the Director.

PRIOR TO SESSION:

* Set up the high ropes course (diagrams and details at the end of this document).   
  For Year 7 students the following activities are generally used:   
  Wobbly ladder, Fly trap, Postmans walk, Cladder bridge, Leap of Faith.  
  Older students in addition may use the following activities:  
  Dangle Duo, Tarzan Vines.
* Organize the equipment required by students
* Brief assistants and/or visiting staff as outlined in the “Assistant/visiting staff responsibilities”, “Safety Briefing” and “Emergency Procedures”

BRIEFING (to students):

Staff can choose how and when to cover the topics below, it may be useful to introduce some of the topics as a night activity. Safety and emergency procedures however must be outlined immediately prior to the session.

Topics to be covered:

1. Ensure students have appropriate clothing and footwear. Students with long hair must tie it back.
2. Discuss the objectives and challenges of the session.
3. Discuss the safety issues and emergency procedures (as outlined above under “Safety Briefing”).
4. Outline group management during the session (rest area, out of bounds area, safe area)
5. Discuss the importance of hydrating adequately (provide opportunities for toilet, food and water breaks)
6. Explain harness and helmet fitting (Waist loop above the hips, leg loops – slide hand inside should be firm)
7. Explain and demonstrate fitting of the chest harness
8. Demonstrate knot tying (Re-threaded figure 8). The end of the rope must pass through 3 loops before tying (Note diagram at the end of this document)
9. Belay training session, every student must be thoroughly trained and closely supervised (4 step method used – pull, lock, swap and slide)
10. Explain how and why no anchor is able to be used for the belayers (Important to have combined weight of belayers equal or greater weight than the climber)
11. Explain why used and practice climbing calls (take up, that’s me, on belay climb when ready, climbing, OK)
12. Explain lowering position for both; belayer (both hands on break rope down near hips) and climber if they fall off the element, otherwise climb down the ladder.
13. Explain procedures for the use of the “Leap of Faith” element and fitting of the full body harness (NB diagram at the end of this document)

**END OF SESSION:**

DEBRIEFING:

* Undertake a brief discussion on success or otherwise of the climbing session.
* Debriefing should address the objectives and can easily relate both to other activities on the program and experiences they may have later in life.
* A brief review of the belayers importance and competence may be of value.

CLEANUP:

Attend to the following items:

* De-rig high ropes course, carefully check the equipment
* Student equipment – Check all students have the handed back activity equipment and check for damage
* Information - relay any appropriate information to; Director or staff regarding student issues or equipment problems.

**RISK MANAGEMENT:**

Staff must review the risk management document prior to each session.

High Ropes Course Risk Assessment

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| Risk Assessment |

This page is used to be more specific about each of the hazards identified, to review the existing safety controls and to assess the risks they pose.

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| **Haz No** | **Hazard** | **Hazard Details** | **C** | **L** | **RR** | **Planned Controls** |
| 1 | Falls from height | Students falling from the ladder or from one of the elements due to poor belay technique | VH | M | H | All students given training on the fitting of harnesses and use of belay devices  Demonstrate and reinforce skills required at the beginning of the session.  Constant close monitoring of all groups of students by Nayook staff (NOT visiting staff)  Identify any students not correctly applying safe practices and either retrain or remove from the activity  Ensure ladder is secured to the tree  For the leap of faith activity Nayook staff only will belay this activity |
| 2 | Fall from height | Student falls due to poor harness fitting and/or poor tie in technique | VH | L | M | All students given training on the fitting of harnesses and use of belay devices  Students are trained and demonstrate knot tying and harness fitting  Each working group of students are checked by a Nayook staff member prior to accessing an element  A full body harness is used for the “Leap of Faith” activity |
| 3 | Fall from height | Student falling as a result of equipment failure on the activity or safety equipment failure. | VH | L | M | Course is independently audited annually  The course is inspected by Nayook staff at the beginning of each term  A visual inspection is carried out prior to each use  Staff monitor students on each element for any sign of equipment failure  Helmets and harness’s are checked at the beginning and end of each session for signs of wear.  Equipment is replaced according to manufacturers recommendations |
| 4 | Equipment jams | Fingers, hair or clothing caught in belay device | H | H | H | Nayook staff to teach correct belay technique and monitor carefully during the activity  Ensure long hair is tied back and loose clothing is tucked in |

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| **Haz No** | **Hazard** | **Hazard Details** | **C** | **L** | **RR** | **Planned Controls** |
| 5 | Radiation | Exposure to the sun, melanoma, sunburn | VH | M | H | Participants should be advised to apply sunscreen before setting out in the morning and again in the middle of the day.  Ensure that all participants standing in the shade if possible.. |
| 6 | Emergency Plans | Evacuation in case of bush fire, injury etc | VH | M | H | Check Weather Forecast for the week on the Bureau of Meteorology website ([www.bom.gov.au](http://www.bom.gov.au))  Review and implement plan for high fire risk days  Modify program if conditions warrant it.  Ensure evacuation vehicles are available at short notice  In high wind conditions do not allow students in the forested area |
| 7 | Heat / Cold Stress | Dehydration, hypothermia | L | L | L | Ensure that all participants have a warm woollen jumper, thermals and a waterproof jacket.  Monitor students if conditions are extreme, a break may be needed to bring students back to the main building.  Ensure adequate hydration with full water bottles. |
| 8 | Sensitised Response | Bee sting, allergic reaction to food | H | L | M | Carry anti- histamine, Epi-pen if student has a known allergy |
| 9 | Animals | Snake Bite | VH | L | M | Instruct students on appropriate behaviour on sighting snake  Ensure students understand emergency procedures if a bite occurs  Instruct students on basic first aid if a bite occurs  If a snake inhabits areas close to buildings a snake removalist should be contacted |
| 10 | Manual Handling | Back problems carrying equipment | H | H | H | Staff only to carry heavy equipment, separate into individual or light items if students assisting  Ensure that packs are not too heavy; spread the weight between more packs  Ensure that there is an adequate waist belt and chest strap to help secure the load  Adjust straps to improve weight bearing.  Try and load backpacks from a height rather than the ground  Assist each other to pick up backpacks. |
| 11 | Area where slips, trips & falls occur | Ankle injuries, abrasions etc | M | H | M | Make sure students stay on the wide and well maintained track to the course  Always walk with eyes to the ground and walk slowly in difficult terrain.  Wear sturdy footwear to protect feet. |

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| **Haz No** | | **Hazard** | **Hazard Details** | | **C** | **L** | | **RR** | **Planned Controls** | | |
| 12 | | Medical | Medical Emergency | | H | H | | H | Ensure that all students have provided parent permission forms.  Staff review medical forms to identify students at risk. | | |
| 13 | | Falling items | Falling Branches or other items falling on the ground | | VH | L | | M | Prior to setting up camp staff should check whether there are any overhanging branches that could create a hazard.  All staff and students and staff to wear a helmet at all times at the High Ropes Course | | |
| 14 | | Environment | Severe thunderstorms | | H | L | | M | Check weather forecasts  Staff must closely observe local weather conditions for possibility of severe weather | | |
| **\*** | **C** – consequences | | | **L** – Likelihood | | | **RR** – Risk Rank = **C x L** | | |  |  | |

L = Low M =Medium H = High VH = Very High E = Extreme

**Actions to be taken as a result of assessment**

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| **Risk Rank** | **Action** |
| Low | An incident or injury highly unlikely to occur |
| Medium | An accident or injury is possible staff need to supervise and be aware of safety and emergency procedures |
| High | Constant and careful supervision is required at all times.  Staff must be well trained for the activity and have a thorough knowledge of all safety and emergency procedures |
| Very High | Consider making changes to this activity as likelihood and consequences of an accident or injury are serious. |
| Extreme | The consequences and likelihood of accident or injury with this or these hazard/s ensure that this activity should not run in its present form |