# Low Ropes Course/Initiative Activities

**LOCATION:**

The initiative activities are undertaken in the area in front of the main buildings or on the basketball court and on the tracks leading to the low ropes course. The low ropes course is just to the south of the buildings in the pine forest.

**DESCRIPTION:**

This session has two components to it. A series of initiative activities are used to begin the session followed by the low ropes course finished by a couple of initiative activities to finish up with.

**AIMS;**

1. To build up responsibility, trust and confidence between students
2. For students to work in a mature and cooperative manner to solve group problems.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

1. Students to learn the skill of spotting responsibly and safely for each other in a variety of activities.
2. To challenge the students physically and mentally on the low ropes course and a variety of initiative activities

**AGE SUITABILITY:**

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

**STAFF/STUDENT RATIO:**

This session is conducted with one Nayook staff and one visiting teacher with up to 15 students.

## Ratios and training: 1:12 Low difficulty and compact courses (Camping and Bush activities (1998))

**INSTRUCTOR EXPERIENCE:**

* The instructor needs to have a good understanding of the initiative activities and low ropes course and of the safety considerations involved with each activity.
* The instructor needs to have a clear understanding of the safety procedures for a potential emergency

**ASSISTANT EXPERIENCE:**

* The assistant/s needs to be able to competently assist the instructor in an emergency and need to have a good understanding of the emergency procedures.

**PARTICIPANT EXPERIENCE:**

* No previous experience is required however overweight, very unfit or students with coordination issues may struggle on some sections of the low ropes and during the initiative activities
* Participants need to responsibly follow safety procedures at all times.

**INSTRUCTOR RESPONSIBILITY:**

* For all students and staff generally
* Brief assistants/visiting staff on their role and the safety procedures.
* Organize activity and safety equipment for the session.
* Brief participants on suitable footwear, clothing, required skills and safety procedures.

**ASSISTANT/VISITING TEACHER RESPONSIBILITY:**

* Assist the instructor where possible
* Monitor groups on the course
* Assist groups with any navigation or other issues
* 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 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 | * Helmets * Initiative activities props |

**PARTICIPANT CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT:**

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| --- | --- |
| Winter/Cold weather requirements | Summer/hot weather requirement |
| * WW Jackets * Daypacks * Suitable footwear * Suitable clothing for the weather conditions * Water bottle * Snacks | * Suitable footwear * Daypacks * Water bottle * Snacks * Sunscreen |

**SAFETY BRIEFING:**

* The group must at all times stay together.
* Stay on a track at all time when participating in the initiative activities
* If someone in the group is injured make sure a staff member is notified immediately.
* If one or more students become separated from the group: lost members STOP immediately, call out and listen but do not move from the current position.
* No running; there are too many tripping/falling hazards.
* Do not interfere with any wildlife.
* In the warmer months be aware of snakes.

- Snake bite prevention: Stay on tracks as much as possible, watch where you are stepping, do not step over logs, rocks, etc without looking on the other side first. If you see a snake, leave it alone.

- Snake bite action – Victim stop, lie down and apply a firm roller bandage over the entire limb. Do not move from position and use emergency whistle to summons assistance

**EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:**

* Deal with the incident or injury
* The low ropes course is close to the entry road
* 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 (?)

**ACTIVITY NOTES:**

The following is the suggested plan for the half day session on the low ropes course. If deviating from this then staff must notify the Director.

PRIOR TO SESSION:

* Organize helmets and gather props for initiative activities (activities and details at the end of this document)
* 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, however safety and emergency procedures must be outlined immediately prior to the session.

Topics to be covered:

1. Discuss the objectives and challenges of the session.
2. Discuss the safety issues and emergency procedures (as outlined above under “Safety Briefing”).
3. Participate in the Initiative activities emphasizing spotting skills for the low ropes course
4. Outline group management while participating in the activities
5. Outline the boundaries for the various activities
6. The importance of hydrating adequately
7. Finish the activity with an initiative activity to tie in the group leadership, cooperation and responsibility themes underpinning the session.

**END OF SESSION:**

DEBRIEFING:

Discussion Points may include the following:

* Discussion on success or otherwise of the initiative activities and low ropes course.
* Emphasize responsible behaviour, problem solving and working in small groups for other activities
* Could address the objectives and can easily relate both to other activities on the program and experiences they may have later in life.

CLEANUP:

Attend to the following items:

Equipment – Check all students have the issued gear with them

Return Helmets to the storage area

Return Initiative props to the storage area

Information - relay any appropriate information to; Director, Visiting Staff, School, Parents as required.

**RISK MANAGEMENT**

Staff must review risk assessment document prior to each session

Low Ropes/Initiative Activities 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 | People | Lost students | M | L | M | Ensure understand boundaries for the various activities.  Ensure students have a thorough understanding on group management and lost procedure.  Ensure staff vigilant during the initiative activities, monitor and assist students at all times. |
| 2 | Falls | Students falling from low ropes course or initiative activities | M | M | M | All students to wear helmets on the low ropes course, including spotters  Explain and practice spotting with students on low risk activities first  Monitor students continuously on all activities for sound spotting technique |
| 3 | 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 are wearing hats when helmets are not required  Encourage students to wear shirts with high collars and long sleeves. |
| 4 | 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 |

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| **Haz No** | | **Hazard** | **Hazard Details** | | **C** | **L** | | **RR** | **Planned Controls** | | |
| 5 | | Heat / Cold Stress | Dehydration, hypothermia | | H | L | | M | Ensure that all participants have a warm woollen jumper, thermals and a waterproof jacket in the colder months.  On hot days students must have a hat when not wearing a helmet, find shady places.  Possibly shorten the activity if heat warrants it or have plenty of breaks  Ensure adequate hydration students to carry full water bottles | | |
| 6 | | Sensitised Response | Bee sting, allergic reaction to food | | H | L | | M | Carry anti- histamine, Epipen if student has a known allergy | | |
| 7 | | Animal | Snake Bite | | H | 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 | | |
| 8 | | Area where slips, trips & falls occur | Ankle injuries, abrasions etc | | M | H | | M | Some tracks are narrow, steep and there are tree roots and other trip hazards.  Always walk with eyes to the ground and walk slowly in difficult terrain. During blindfolded activities partners needed to be briefed on the care required  Good sturdy shoes are essential (no thongs or light sandals)  Instruct students not to run and blindfolded students not to walk unless instructed to.  Staff should ensure groups operate in areas safe and suitable for the activity being undertaken. | | |
| 9 | | Medical | Medical Emergency | | M | L | | M | Ensure that all students have provided parent permission forms.  Staff review medical forms to identify students at risk. | | |
| 10 | | Trees | Falling Branches | | VH | L | | M | In high wind conditions do not allow students in the forested area  Staff to undertake regular checks of dangerous trees or limbs, report to the relevant person for action | | |
| **\*** | **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 and highly probable. |
| 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 |