

Ski Program including Risk Assessment

POLICY – TAWONGA PRIMARY SCHOOL

The context of the Snowsports Program

Snowsports are part of life in Tawonga due to its proximity to the Alpine Environment. The school snowsports program aims to:

- Improve the skills of students in their chosen snowsports in a safe and controlled manner.
- Promote a lifelong active, healthy lifestyle in our students.
- Develop an understanding of working as a group and looking out for each other.
- Develop an awareness of the Alpine environments weather, vegetation and risks.
- Build independence and organisational skills.
- Encourage participation in the Joey Hoppet school team.

The snowsports program is primarily based at Falls Creek Alpine Resort.

The program will be supervised by a ski co-ordinator with extensive experience in snowsports, school staff and parents also experienced in snowsports.

The program is open to all students in years 3 to 6. Specific locations (ski runs) will be chosen based on the ability of each group.

The downhill component will consist of skiing in the morning in ability groups with a supervising adult followed by an afternoon of lessons with a qualified instructor. The cross country component of the program will be supervised by a suitably experienced teacher approved by the Principal, students will stay together in a group.

The Victorian Alpine Resorts and Falls Creek Environs are appropriate locations for the snowsports program. Safety measures we have in place are the experience and local knowledge of the staff supervising the program, the transportation of students by alpine-licensed drivers provision of the medical/first aid backup on mountain, mobile phone communication and of course proximity to Mount Beauty in case of the need to get students home quickly.

Environment Considerations

Alpine environments

The alpine environment is generally understood to comprise the landscapes found above 1200m and covered by winter snow. Snow can fall at any time of the year and severe snowstorm conditions can deposit snow down to 800m or lower. These landscapes include the forested sub-alpine zone up to the tree line and then the true alpine zone above.

Snow and weather conditions can change with location and over time. These changes may be rapid and drastic. Differences can be experienced in and out of tree cover, on different slope aspects and at different times of the day. Environmental conditions can be extreme, variable and unpredictable.

Vegetation loss or damage, which is influenced by our behaviours and the activities we conduct in alpine areas, can be rapid and may persist for many seasons. Soil exposure because of human intervention can be permanent in some situations and should be avoided.

When preparing for downhill skiing and snowboarding, consider ways to minimise the [environmental impact](#) of the activities.

Students will be prepared for the alpine environment through:

- Appropriate clothing and equipment checklists being provided in the information pack.
- Comprehensive gear check day at school.
- Class discussions on the Alpine Responsibility Code / Downhill Code and procedure if lost or one of their group becomes injured. Watch Video, 'A Snow Safety Film'.
- Instruction on caring for the fragile environment and consequences if users of the area are not looking after the park.

On the day:

- Equipment and clothing will be checked on students when lift tickets are distributed.
- Supervising staff/parents have local knowledge of the resort and appropriate areas to ski in.

Location

Supervising staff/parents will be familiar with the location of all activities.

Communication

Each supervising staff member/parent will have a mobile phone.

Each supervisor will have the phone numbers of each member of their group in case they need to be contacted.

An emergency contact list will be distributed to all adults attending.

Each student will have a laminated 'in case of emergency' tag to carry with them on a lanyard which will have contact numbers for both on and off the mountain.

Emergency Procedures (lost/injured):

If a student is notified as missing by their buddy the whole group is to return to the nominated meeting point. The meeting point will be identified each day. If the student does not appear at the Meeting Point after 15 minutes, ski patrol will be informed. **Let students know this.**

- If an injury occurs call ski patrol with details of the location and injury.
- Call the Teacher in Charge and let them know what is happening.
- Wait for ski patrol to arrive. Often students are just shaken and will return skiing **after being assessed by ski patrol**. Take no risks, especially with concussion. Call school and let them know there is an injury straight away. You can always let them know it was a false alarm later. *We don't want parents to find out about injuries from anywhere except school.*
- If the student needs to go to the Medical Centre, call the school first and let them know the situation. If necessary the whole group may need to accompany you. They can wait in the Gateway public shelter. The Medical Centre is at the bottom of the Gully Chair.

Any students who becomes very cold or who needs a break can sit in Windy Corner, Cloud 9 or Falls Express (Halley's) Day Shelter with one of the supervising adults. They will be supervised by an adult for the ENTIRE SESSION. They can't go and find their group if they suddenly feel better.

Weather

Weather will be evaluated on the morning of all snowsports days at 7am by the teacher in charge in consultation with another staff member through the BOM website and Falls Creek contact if available.

The following factors will be used when considering if to cancel due to weather condition forecast being unsafe i.e.

- lifts on wind hold or over 50kmh average, or a combination of winds over 40kmh with poor visibility
- Poor visibility is defined as 100 metres or less.
- Wind chill of -10 degrees or greater.
- If rain is forecast at a rate greater than 3-5mm per 3 hourly clock with a confidence of 50% as per BOM Meteye forecast for Falls Creek. (Snowing is OK).

If the weather is found to be bad enough to make skiing an unpleasant experience the day will be shortened or abandoned. This can happen at any stage after setting out.

Transport

Students will be transported by Falls Creek Coach Service.

Ambulance cover is also an essential element of the trip to protect parents from possible very high emergency transport costs.

This will be encourage through the letter home to families.

Activities

Adventure Activity Guidelines will be followed as per Department guidelines. A risk assessment has been undertaken and is attached and will be reviewed each year.

Equipment group and technical

Each supervising staff member will monitor the safety equipment of their group. This includes helmets, clothing, eye protection and sunscreen.

Staffing

The program will be supervised by a ski co-ordinator with extensive experience in snowsports. They will be supported by staff and parents who also are experienced in snowsports. Other community members may also be called upon to act as volunteers. A working with children check and a Code of Conduct must be completed for all helpers. The ski co-ordinator will approach parents and other volunteers to ask them to assist.

Supervision

Minimum supervision requirements set out by DEECD

	Staff numbers	Student numbers
Downhill and cross country skiing (day activities only)	2	Up to 16
	3	17 - 24
	4	25 - 32

Our days will have a minimum of two staff members for in resort activities where ski patrol can be called upon in an emergency. A ratio of at least 1:4 will be maintained. Within the alpine resort the group will be broken up into ability groups with up to 4 students per group. Contact will be maintained between groups via mobile phone and groups can be merged in case of injury. Students with additional needs will be supported with a 1:1 ratio.

Staff will be briefed and given an information package outlining their supervisory roles and procedures for the day.

Parent helpers will be required to attend a compulsory meeting prior to the ski day to explain the program aims and procedures. Parents will be informed of their responsibilities, expectations and safety procedures.

Each year a decision will be made based on numbers and spread of abilities whether to run downhill skiing over the whole program to keep the groups small.

Informed consent

Parents will be given a comprehensive information pack and signed consent to the activities will be obtained before students can participate. Consent will be sought from parents to release the details of Behaviour Support Plans of children with special needs if deemed necessary by staff.

On Mountain:

- Students should go the toilet before skiing.
- Staff must know where each student in his/her group is **at all times**.
- All students in a group need to be on the same run at any time **no exceptions**
- Use a buddy system. Pair up each student with a buddy that they need to be able to see at all times.
- Explain to students that they must inform the group leader as soon as a buddy is missing. Buddies must know what their partners are wearing to help ski patrol in a search.
- Long runs like Wombat's Ramble need to be broken into segments where the whole group meets up again. They are too long to let students go at their own pace.
- It can take a long time to get a beginner group down Wombats Ramble. Make a judgement on how long it will take. If in doubt, have a trial run down it with the group.
- Downhill students are provided with high visibility vests for easy identification.

Misbehaviour:

Following all instructions is super important in this situation. No Snowballs, ever! Respect your teacher, parent helper and ski instructor. Any problems with behaviour will result in the student involved receiving immediate consequences with consideration given to missing the next ski session.

This policy will be reviewed each year was last ratified by School Council in....

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Risk Assessment:

Risks	Minimum Controls
Ability and fitness of students	Select a run location appropriate to the skill level of all students in the group. Year 3 students included in the downhill ski part only after consultation with parents.
Crowded slopes, particularly in resort areas, diminishing the ability to supervise effectively	Communicate boundaries to students including any ski runs out-of-bounds. Establish emergency meeting points. Confirm with staff the supervision strategy. Buddy system between students. Students to meet at the bottom of the lift after every run.
Collision with solid objects	Clear instruction and supervised practice of stopping and speed control techniques. Provide a clear brief on speed control and falling over safely to prevent collision.
Collision with other skiers	Clear instruction on 'skiers responsibility code' including homework sheet and clear direction to not ski in a close group in potential collision situations such as on downhill slopes.
Exposure to cold temperatures and wind	Pre-activity safety briefing on clothing and food required. Clothing to be checked at commencement as appropriate to the activity and able to accommodate likely weather changes. Monitoring of weather conditions throughout the activity and being prepared to cancel modify or relocate the activity as required.
Separation from the group	Clear instruction to students on group management strategy. Check for students after each run. Buddies to always have their buddy in sight. Brief to all students at the start of the activity on the procedure to be followed if a student is separated from the group.
Exposure to ultraviolet radiation.	Broad spectrum sunscreen available for student use throughout the day. All students to wear sunglasses or goggles to protect their eyes from glare off the snow.
Falling objects off lifts	Instruct students not to stop under chairlifts
Terrain Park obstacles	Terrain Park is only to be used under supervision of experienced instructors i.e. lessons.
Rocks, tree branches	Advise students of locations of these Stop group before obstacle
Fatigue and exhaustion	Monitor students looking for signs of fatigue such as constant falls, crossing skis etc.
Stopping in blind spots	Demonstrate and educate students on appropriate and inappropriate places to stop
Injuries	Stress importance of skiing in control at all times Advise students of what to do if injured Have outlined plan for emergencies known to all staff
Over Confidence	Advise and teach proper skiing techniques. Warn of fatigue when it is likely to set in. Teach students how to fight fatigue: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resting for lunch - Drinking plenty of fluids and eat snacks Advise students that confidence usually grows more than skill level. Ensure the supervisor determines the appropriate ski runs.
Ski Runs	Check run conditions boards at the top of lifts for warnings such as ice or poor cover and avoid those areas.