

## **Introduction:**

### **Goals of the Risk Management Plan:**

Managing risk in our program hinges on the reduction of the degree of real risk to a level considered acceptable to everyday exposure. Safety is a paramount consideration. Although there are many factors we cannot control, we will do everything possible to minimize risk to our students. Risk management planning is an attempt to identify particular hazards of an activity and devise strategies to neutralise or minimize their potential to cause injury to participants.

The goals of this plan are to reduce the likelihood of harm or loss resulting from the operations of the Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School Program. These include physical, mental and financial losses that could be incurred by students, their families, staff, volunteers, and other guest leaders. This document seeks to systematically identify areas of risk and consider what controls may be implemented to reduce the likelihood of harm or loss taking place. Furthermore, the protocols contained within this document hope to mitigate the impact that a loss might have on all parties and the school community.

This document will evolve and change to reflect the practices of our program and recognized best practices.

The Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School Program Risk Management Plan will be reviewed a minimum of three times each year: at the beginning of school in September prior to any off campus outings, mid-year in late winter, and again at the end of the school year. As well a review will take place in the event of a significant incident.

### **Departure Bay Elementary Learning in Nature Risk Philosophy:**

Risk exists in almost every activity humans engage in. Risks are involved in activities at home, in the community, getting to and from places, at a friend's house, and in the outdoors. There are inherent risks involved in activities in nature. Inherent risks are those that are integral to the activity and removing them would destroy the unique character of the activity. Desirable inherent risks would be rocks and logs and stumps to hike through or over and explore around. Undesirable inherent risks could be sudden and severe changes in the weather, slippery logs after a heavy rain, or days of fog. At Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School, we believe that risks are reasonably offset by the potential learning value of the experience. The Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School Program Risk Management Plan is intended to assist with minimizing the risks involved with learning in the natural environment off campus, and in the response should an emergency occur.

### **Risk Reduction:**

The aim of risk reduction is to implement a range of strategies that will minimize risks to an acceptable level in an attempt to prevent incidents occurring. A range of strategies for reducing risks will include: participant safety guidelines, risk disclosure, staff training and knowing our participants.

### **Possible Inherent Risks:**

The list below identifies possible inherent risks that may be encountered by staff, students and volunteers on outings into the natural environment, en route to the outdoor learning areas, and while in the outdoor learning areas. This list provides examples for staff and families and is not to be considered exhaustive of all inherent risks.

- Injuries related to en route transportation to and from the location (vehicle traffic);
- Becoming lost or separated from the group or the group becoming split up;
- Injuries related to trips, slips and falls; foot injuries/sore feet (e.g. blisters, sprains or leg/knee/ankle injuries);
- If carrying a bag – injuries related to lifting, carrying or putting down the bag;
- Injuries related to collisions with other students and/or immovable objects (e.g. trees);
- Allergic reactions to natural toxins in the environment;
- Changing body temperatures (discomfort);
- Changing weather conditions/tides, river flow;
- Animal encounters (wildlife + domestic);
- Strangers

### **How can parents help manage risk?**

- Review the gear list and ensure your child has ALL the gear necessary to participate dry and warm, and sun safe – screen hats, clothes that cover, appropriate footwear;
- Ensure your child has a change of clothes at the school;
- Ensure your child has water and nutritious snacks and lunch;
- Ensure your contact information is up to date;
- Complete the student’s medical form in consideration of all the inherent risks;
- Supply the school with any medications necessary – complete the necessary consent forms for the administration of medications;
- Ask questions and be informed – sign the consent forms (consent forms will be used when the classroom location is beyond the walking area of our school);
- Recognize and support, that while in the outdoors, the needs of the group generally take precedence over the needs of the individual;
- Enroll in the School District’s student accident insurance program for additional medical coverage if you feel it necessary; (see link on SD68 website for information)
- Reinforce at home: listening skills, listening to be safe; making safe choices;
- Gaining independence at home (primary)– practical living skills that will help them thrive at school: putting on mittens, coat, hat, hanging things up to dry, toileting.

### **Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School Program Ethics in Operation:**

#### **General:**

- a) The Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School staff will conduct learning experiences with an appropriate level of competence, integrity, and responsibility; respecting the rights and dignity of the learners and volunteers.
- b) The Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School staff will maintain a concern for the well-being of the learners and volunteers, fellow staff, and themselves.

#### **Environmental Understanding:**

- a) The Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School will not conduct activities that cause permanent damage to the environment.
- b) The Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School conducts activities that leave “no trace” on the environment, or when appropriate, only minimal impact on the environment.
- c) The Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School respects the wildlife in the area of the outdoor learning environment.
- d) The Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School will select a route where impact to the environment is minimal. In the forest, routes are on trails.
- e) The Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School respects the wildlife in the outdoor learning area.
- f) Human waste will be disposed in the natural environment in a minimally invasive manner should disposal be necessary. If this cannot be accomplished it will be carried out.
- g) All paper, packaging and human garbage will be carried out.
- h) The Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School will limit its impact both physical and visual, returning the area to the way it was found should this be necessary in the specific location.
- i) Tents and tarps will be used in place of constructing large shelters from surrounding materials. Tents and tarps will be set up in an environmentally appropriate manner; in public areas, will be taken down and carried out each day.

#### **Human Understanding:**

- a) The Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School respects the local culture, both aboriginal and non-aboriginal including both social and physical and will endeavor to include such learning in its activities in an integrated and ongoing basis.

#### **Operational Standards:**

- a) Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School staff will select outdoor classrooms and activities complementary to our program, our school district’s and BC curriculum learning elements: Inquiry Based Learning; Experiential Learning; Place-Based Learning; Curiosity and Creativity; Service Learning and Environmental Literacy.
- b) Staff will inform parents via planners of their intended off-site trips prior to the date of trip;
- c) Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School staff will be familiar with all outdoor classroom setting including natural hazards such as plant and wildlife. As well with how to prevent contact and respond to medical emergencies that arise from inadvertent contact.

- d) Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School will complete a Hazard Assessment for each outdoor classroom location to be updated biannually and as needed given observed changes.
- e) Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School staff will conduct a pre-outing safety talk prior to departure each day that an outing away from the school site occurs.
- f) Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School staff will complete a Site Specific Safety Checklist upon the arrival to an outdoor classroom, including noting any hazards en route. Current weather conditions will be assessed to determine the level of risk presented and outing plans adjusted accordingly.
- g) Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School will carry a cell phone at all times when away from the school site.
- h) Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School staff will carry a fully stocked first aid kit, including contact list, and emergency response plan reference, at all times when away from the school site.
- i) Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School staff will log the date, duration, route, location, and adults attending with the office prior to departure from the school.
- j) Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School staff will carry a list of students will contact information including medical alert and Care Card numbers.
- k) Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School staff absences: in the event of a teacher absence outdoor classroom locations will be limited in terms of distance from the school and inherent risks.
- l) Off school site staff student ratio (locations in close proximity to school): Primary: (minimum: 2 staff to 24 students), Intermediate: dependent upon location, student needs and risk/hazards of activity
- m) Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School staff will be familiar with the students' health needs, skill level, and psychological readiness as determined by past experience and pre-outing check-in.
- n) Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School staff will be familiar with, maintain, and carry out the Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School risk management protocols and emergency response plan.
- o) Students will carry safety whistles and or have a class signal.

### **Emergency Response Protocols:**

The following guidelines are designed to assist the Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School staff with decision-making while in an outdoor learning location, as well as traveling to and from the location.

- Provide the best possible care for the victim.
- Evacuate the individual as quickly as deemed possible without unduly jeopardizing others.
- Authorize whatever responses are deemed necessary by the Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School staff.
- Maximize the safety of the other students, staff and volunteers.

### **Emergency Response Plan:**

- Take time to ensure you are calm and plan your response
- The steps below should be conducted in the listed order
- Determine the priority of the response
- Determine the type of response required
- Using these factors, make a decision about the most appropriate evacuation method

### **First Aid**

Provide first aid as per training. Steps usually include:

1. Take charge and remain calm
2. Assess the scene
3. Assess and treat the victim: Airway, Breathing, Circulation, Bleeding
4. Provide initial shock care
5. Complete head-to-toe assessment
6. Determine a treatment plan
7. Provide treatment as necessary

### **Evacuation**

Determine if an evacuation is required. An evacuation will be based upon the following priorities:

Non-urgent: timing is not critical but the patient cannot continue with the group activities. Evacuation will occur as soon as "convenient" with regard to the safety and organization of the whole group and most often will involve a "self-propelled" evacuation from the area at which point further medical treatment will be sought with arranged support persons.

Semi-urgent: injuries are not immediately life-threatening; the patient can wait for other medical or support personnel to assist with the evacuation.

Urgent: injuries are immediately life-threatening. Every effort should be made to evacuate the patient to medical care as soon as possible.

### **Type of Response**

Determine the type of response necessary as related to an evacuation plan.

Contained within the setting; this is the majority of minor accidents/incidents. A staff member will be able to provide the necessary medical care and the student/volunteer/staff will be able to continue with the class.

- An incident form shall be filled out the same day for incidents beyond standard blisters, slivers, small cuts, minor dehydration, bumps and bangs etc... DBES Principal and Parents/Guardians will be notified.

### Self –Contained Evacuation:

Most injury related evacuations will be of this type. The Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School staff will be able to administer first aid and use the resources at hand to evacuate the student/volunteer/staff. If necessary the individual will be transported to a clinic or hospital for further treatment. DBES will be notified of the evacuation: reason, route, and further support needed if necessary. An incident form will be filled out and parents notified.

### External Agency Supported evacuation:

This is an accident or injury that requires the assistance of additional medical personnel: an ambulance will be called. DBES will be contacted. Parent/Guardians notified of the situation and evacuation plan. An incident form will be filled out. A staff debrief will be conducted. Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School families will be notified by the school principal indicating general information regarding the status of the individual and the circumstance. The purpose is to ensure a level of communication regarding safety for all students, while protecting the privacy of the individual and family.

## **Hazard Assessment**

A hazard assessment is completed for each of the outdoor classroom learning locations used by Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School. The specific locations will vary depending on grade. Departure Creek/Woodland Park and Departure Bay Beach are two of our established school-wide outdoor learning locations.

The hazard assessment is completed to ensure that hazards inherent and non-inherent to a given location are identified and a mitigating response established. The hazard assessment will be used to inform the Pre-outing safety talk. Hazard assessments will be updated upon the discovering of additional hazards due to changing environments, season and land use as necessary.

The following risk rating will be contained within the Hazard assessment to inform Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School staff:

Probability: Low, Medium, High  
Severity: Low, Medium, High  
Overall Rating: Low, Medium, High

### **Safety Talk Outline:**

1. Introduction
  - a) Introduce new staff or volunteers
  - b) Explain the need to listen and think – safety is a shared responsibility
2. Trip Specifics:
  - a) Introduce the outing and destination – where, geography, weather etc..
  - b) Describe the inherent risks (location Hazard Assessment)
  - c) Explain/review what to do in an emergency
  - d) Review “calls” and specific taught safety measures

3. Participant's Responsibilities:
  - a) Review/explain physical demands
  - b) Complete a general gear check (student and volunteer Go Kits)
  - c) Check in and identify any physical or emotional needs
  - d) Remind students and volunteers to notify Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School staff if they observe any incidents/accidents or new hazards
  
4. Closing
  - a) Address any questions from students or volunteers

## Departure Bay Elementary Eco-School Gear List for September 2015

- \_\_\_ Any medications needing to be administered at school (updated Epi-pens, Benadryl....)
- \_\_\_ Well fitted backpack (preferred chest and hip clips)
- \_\_\_ Outdoor weather boots (rain, cold)
- \_\_\_ Running shoes
- \_\_\_ Rain Pants (must be able to go on and off over boots)
- \_\_\_ Rain Jacket
- \_\_\_ Rain Hat
- \_\_\_ Sunscreen
- \_\_\_ Sun hat
- \_\_\_ Winter Toque
- \_\_\_ Water bottle
- \_\_\_ Clothes bag/Change of clothes
- \_\_\_ Mittens (not gloves)
- \_\_\_ Extra gloves (dollar store'ish)
- \_\_\_ Extra socks (non-cotton socks best)
- \_\_\_ Fox40 whistle

