CARA information sheet

Those responsible for any school curriculum activity have legal obligations and a common law duty of care to ensure the safety of all those involved in the activity through curriculum activity risk management.

This document aims to assist in allocating risk levels and deciding on control measures when planning curriculum activities.

This information sheet should be used in conjunction with:

* the [Managing risks in school curriculum activities](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/managing-risks-in-school-curriculum-activities-procedure) procedure as the guiding document for risk assessment and management processes when conducting curriculum activities in Queensland schools. It outlines the responsibilities of all departmental employees and provides the minimum Curriculum Activity Risk Assessment (CARA) process to be followed by all state schools
* the [Managing risks in school curriculum activities flowchart](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/managing-risks-in-school-curriculum-activities-flowchart.pdf) as a brief representation of the procedure
* the [CARA planner](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/cara-planner.docx) to summarise the minimum planning and documentation processes
* the [CARA generic template](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/cara-generic-template.docx) to complete a CARA record if a CARA guideline does not exist for an activity.

For further assistance, consult your school leaders (e.g. DP, HOD, HOC, HOSES) for advice.

The CARA inbox ([CARA@qed.qld.gov.au](mailto:CARA@qed.qld.gov.au)) is available for non-urgent support or feedback on curriculum activity risk assessments and the general CARA process.

## Identifying risks and hazards in context

Incorporate the following factors when planning risk management strategies considering the specific activity context.

#### Which students will be involved?

Determine the risks and hazards posed by:

* the number of participants, size of student groups and students' capabilities, e.g. age, experience, competence, fitness, or maturity
* any individual participant needs that may require additional supervision ratios, e.g. personalised learning, support provisions (including behaviour support plans), health management (including health plans and prescribed medication requirements) or identification (including uniforms, hats and/or high visibility wrist bands).

#### Where will the students be?

Determine the risks and hazards that may be present posed by:

* the location of the activity (e.g. remote/easily accessible, public/private, school/classroom/workshop)
* buildings, pedestrians, members of the public, vehicles and other activities (e.g. designated areas for the activity, spectators and vehicles)
* the space available for the number of participants
* weather and environmental conditions (e.g. sun, temperature, storms, water currents)
* biological conditions (e.g. viruses, skin infections)
* the site of the activity (e.g. poisonous plants, dangerous animals, uneven terrain, barbed wire).

#### What will the students be doing?

Determine the risks and hazards in the activity posed by:

* unexpected emergencies (e.g. develop response strategies, communication plans, evacuation plans)
* unexpected first aid and emergency medical treatment requirements (e.g. consider the location of first aid kits, first aid trained personnel, Ventolin®, Epipen®, and students' personal prescribed medications as required in health plans)
* the nature and duration of the activity (e.g. need for drinking water, food, rest, appropriate clothing, warm-up)
* participant inexperience or unfamiliarity of the rules, pre-requisite skills and safety procedures (e.g. consider progressive skill development, safety induction)
* personal items and hair (e.g. clothing, footwear, jewellery, drink bottles, towels and mouthguards).

#### What will the students be using?

Determine the risks and hazards in the activity posed by:

* mishandling/misuse of equipment (e.g. consider induction on safety procedures and safe handling of equipment)
* inappropriate or insufficient equipment (e.g. ensure the equipment is suitable for the activity, properly maintained, and complies with the relevant safety standard). Adhere to [CARA guidelines](https://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/stages-of-schooling/CARA/activity-guidelines) for the use of equipment, compliance of equipment and appropriate work processes.

#### Who will be leading the activity?

Determine the expertise and/or competence of the supervisors to ensure:

* sufficient adult supervision is in place to manage the activity safely (including in emergency situations)
* ready access to personnel with current First Aid and/or CPR qualifications. In some instances it may need to be the supervisors
* the activity leader has the expertise (formal qualifications) or competence (knowledge and skills) to plan, induct, instruct and manage the activity safely for participants and others
* a safety induction session (including designation of roles) is conducted with all supervisors prior to the commencement of the activity, outlining risk management processes and emergency response strategies for the activity
* supervisors are active in their supervision, visible and readily identifiable to participants
* Blue Card requirements are met for all supervisors (when required).

***NOTE:***A registered teacher must retain overall responsibility for the activity*.*

## Assessing the risks in context

Risk is the likelihood that a harmful consequence (e.g. injury) will occur when exposed to a hazard.

An inherent risk level is made up of two elements, that is:

1. the likelihood of an incident happening; and
2. the consequence if it did happen.

There are many factors that influence the likelihood and consequence of an incident. A few examples include:

* the duration or frequency of the exposure to the hazard (e.g. sun or chemical exposure)
* the competence of those undertaking the activity (e.g. no training or inexperience may lead to an accident)
* the environmental conditions (e.g. water in the vicinity of electricity, getting injured in an isolated area)
* the speeds, heights and weights of objects being used (i.e. the greater the force, the greater the impact).

To assess the inherent level of risk, the likelihood of an incident is combined with the seriousness of the consequence. Use the matrix below as a guide to assist with allocating a risk level to **each hazard** identified during planning.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Likelihood** | **Consequence** | | | | |
| **Insignificant**  *No treatment required.* | **Minor**  *Injury requiring first aid treatment* | **Moderate**  *Injury requiring medical treatment* | **Major**  *Serious injury requiring specialist medical treatment or hospitalisation.* | **Critical**  *Multiple serious injuries, permanent disability or loss of life.* |
| **Almost Certain**  Expected to occur in most circumstances | Medium | Medium | High | Extreme | Extreme |
| **Likely**  Will probably occur in most circumstances | Low | Medium | High | High | Extreme |
| **Possible**  Might occur occasionally | Low | Medium | High | High | High |
| **Unlikely**  Could happen at some time | Low | Low | Medium | Medium | High |
| **Rare**  May only occur in exceptional circumstances | Low | Low | Low | Low | Medium |

## Allocating an inherent risk level for the activity

The inherent risk level is dictated by the hazard with the **highest risk level** in the activity.

The inherent risk level will determine the degree of planning and approval required.

| **Inherent risk level** | | **Action Required/Approval** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Low** | Little chance of incident or injury | * Document risks and controls as part of the three levels of planning. |
| **Medium** | Some chance of an incident and injury requiring first aid | Follow school-based decisions for documentation. Either:   * complete a CARA record in OneSchool; OR * document risks, hazards and controls through the three levels of planning. |
| **High** | Likely chance of a significant incident and injury requiring medical treatment | * Complete a CARA record in OneSchool. * Obtain approval from the principal or school leader (i.e. DP, HOD, HOSES) prior to conducting this activity. This approval is automatically requested in OneSchool when the CARA record is completed. * Obtain and document [parent consent](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/excursion-consent-form-template.docx) (highly recommended).   \* *Activity details are automatically stored in OneSchool once approved.* |
| **Extreme** | High chance of a serious incident resulting in highly debilitating injury | * Consider conducting an alternative activity or modifying the activity to reduce the risk and achieve comparable learning outcomes. * Complete a CARA record in OneSchool. * Obtain approval from the principal prior to conducting this activity. This approval is automatically requested in OneSchool when the CARA record is completed. * Obtain and document [parent consent](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/excursion-consent-form-template.docx) (required).   \* *Activity details are automatically stored in OneSchool once approved.* |

**NOTE:**Off-site activities require parent/carer consent and principal approval irrespective of the inherent risk level. Refer to the *Excursion planner* template in OneSchool, the [School excursions](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/school-excursions-procedure) procedure or the [International school study tours](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/international-school-study-tours-procedure) procedure.

## Determining the control measures

Control measures are used so the activity can be conducted with an acceptable level of residual risk.

[CARA guidelines](https://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/stages-of-schooling/CARA/activity-guidelines) have been developed for many common curriculum activities to show the *minimum* control measures that need to be employed when conducting the activity.

Schools must meet the requirements on the CARA guideline (if it exists). Additional hazards and control measures according to the school context must be identified and put in place to meet or exceed the standard on the CARA guideline.

Supervisors are strongly encouraged to improve the safety standard of the activity by *increasing* the control measures according to the hierarchy of control (below).

**Elimination**: remove the hazard completely from the workplace or activity

**Substitution**: replace a hazard with a less dangerous one (e.g. using a softer ball, different location)

**Isolation**: separate people from the hazard (e.g. safety barrier)

**Redesign**: make a machine or work process safer

**Administration**: put rules or extra training in place to make the activity safer

**Use PPE**: use protective clothing and equipment (e.g. helmet, gloves, shin pads).

*Most effective*

*Least effective*

**Hierarchy of control**

If a CARA guideline exists, all additional and alternative control measures must be documented on the CARA record for the activity.

If a CARA guideline does not exist, schools document all risks, hazards and controls on the [CARA generic template](https://ppr.mpe.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/cara-generic-template.docx) (called ‘Other’ in OneSchool) as the CARA record.

## Implementing the control measures

Before the activity:

* issue all supervisors of the activity with a copy of the CARA record
* ensure all requirements are met
* induct all supervisors on the emergency and safety details for the activity.

During the activity:

* implement and monitor all documented control measures from the CARA record to manage and supervise the activity
* respond to any emerging risks and hazards as they arise and adjust control measures accordingly.

**If any participant is endangered at any time, the activity must cease.**

## Reviewing the control measures

Reviewing the control measures after the activity is often overlooked in the risk assessment process, but it is a vital step in improving the safety standards and outcomes for students.

Add review comments and amendments to the risks, hazards and control measures to the CARA record on completion of the activity. These comments and amendments must be considered when the activity is being conducted in the future.