

Management of Activities in Adverse Environmental Conditions

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<p>Policy Statement: This purpose of this policy is to provide staff with direction for the modification of outdoor activities to reduce the risks to all participants associated with adverse weather conditions.</p> <p>NOTE: All activities have their own procedural standards for safe operation thus adherence to this policy alone does not guarantee safe outcomes in its own right</p>	

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1 SCOPE

1.1 ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE CONSIDERATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

- General Camp activity rotations under the direction of Coolamatong Program Manager.
- Expeditions
- Training events for any SU Volunteers
- Holiday camps run by either Camp Coolamatong or Scripture Union Victoria

1.2 PROCESS FOR DECISION MAKING

The Bureau of Meteorology often forecasts conditions that are on the borderline of whether an activity needs to be modified or cancelled. The following factors should be taken into consideration:

1.2.1 On site activity (including non-journey canoeing or rafting within 400m of the entry point):

Forecast of adverse conditions should be noted and alternative plan considered for modification. If the forecast eventuates then the activity needs to be cancelled.

1.2.2 Boat Trip (CC Neill beyond Duck Arm):

Borderline forecast should result in discussion of trip options between the Coolamatong Program Manager, Teacher in Charge and the Skipper. Then an agreement should be made whether to modify or cancel a trip based on the forecast.

Forecast beyond adverse conditions will automatically result in cancellation or postponement of the trip.

1.2.3 Offsite (Expedition):

Borderline forecast before departure requires discussion between the Coolamatong Program Manager, the school's Teacher in Charge and the CC Neill Skipper to identify the ability to shelter from conditions and ease of evacuation during expedition. Where exposure cannot be managed cancellation should be considered. Where exposure can be managed contingency plan should be set and expedition continued until such time that conditions require contingency.

Forecast beyond adverse conditions will automatically result in cancellation or postponement of the trip.

When forecast increases beyond adverse after expedition has commenced, discussion between the Coolamatong Expedition Leader, Coolamatong Program Manager and the school's Teacher in Charge should identify the ability to shelter from conditions and ease of evacuation. If exposure cannot be managed cancellation and evacuation must be considered. If exposure can be managed, contingency and communication plans should be agreed upon and the expedition continued until such time that conditions require contingency.

2 SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL EVENTS

2.1 SEVERE WIND

A decision to modify or cancel activities need to be made in consultation with the Coolamatong Program Manager, the school's Teacher in Charge and the CC Neil Skipper. They will consider the forecast in conjunction with:

- Area of intended program
- Wind direction
- Capacity to add more instructors to the group

If campers are on expo, every effort will be made to camp in an area that is free of large timber that is considered potentially hazardous to students and staff in tents. Walking through heavily wooded areas will be seriously considered with alternatives discussed in consultation with the manager of that campsite or with the Coolamatong Director.

2.1.1 Wind Categories

Coastal waters wind warnings issued by the Bureau are categorised as follows :

Strong Wind Warning: Winds averaging from 26 knots and up to 33 knots.

Gale Warning: Winds averaging from 34 knots and up to 47 knots.

Storm Force Wind Warning: Winds averaging from 48 knots and up to 63 knots.

Hurricane Force Wind Warning: Winds averaging 64 knots or more.

Conversion: 1 knot = 1 nautical mile per hour = 1.85 kilometres per hour

2.1.2 Strong wind or greater eventuating

- All land based activities cease once wind reaches 30 knots or greater
- All water based activities cease once wind reaches 25 knots or greater
- Bushcraft activity will be reviewed and modified at anything greater than 15 knots
- Staff may, at their discretion, finish early any activity at winds speeds less that 25 knots if they feel that campers are unable to continue meaningfully due to the wind and their capability.
- Campers on expo to be located in clear areas overnight.
- Water activities as part of expo to be suspended and not recommenced until communication with the Program Manger has been made and a contingency is agreed upon.

2.1.3 CC Neill Trips

CC Neill trips will continue as planned up to and including forecasts of 25 knots, average wind speed depending on direction. Once forecast reaches 30 knots average wind speed, CC Neill trips will be rescheduled or if necessary cancelled.

If wind eventuates above 25 knots the continuation of the trip will occur at the discretion of the CC Neill Skipper in consultation with the Coolamatong Program Manager.

2.1.4 Locations affected by wind:

Duck Arm – West Corner (Canoe Sessions)

Protected from S/SW, W and N/NW wind directions

Observation required to determine impact of strong wind.

Westerly directional winds affect this area most and the adverse conditions cut off should be scaled down by 5 knots when winds are from this direction.

Duck Arm (Canoe Journey)

Protected from S and N wind directions

Journey up and down Duck Arm will be impacted by strong winds with either W or E components and the trip will need to be modified so that it does not leave Duck Arm.

Mason’s Bay

Protected from N/NE wind directions

Observation required to determine suitability of Mason’s Bay in any strong wind.

South and South-westerly directional winds affect this area most and the adverse conditions cut off should be scaled down by 5 knots when winds are from this direction.

Lake Victoria

CC Neill trips may be adversely affected by winds from South West or North East even at levels from 20 – 25 knots due to the long fetch in those directions. Trips may be modified in consultation with the Coolamatong Program Manager, the school’s Teacher in Charge and the CC Neil Skipper.

N/NW and S/SE wind directions may pose reduced difficulties for CC Neill by comparison.

2.2 ELECTRICAL STORMS

Electrical storms occur frequently over summer months:

- When electrical activity has become close the following guidelines must be considered to reduce risks of injury.
- Electrical activity is considered close when there is 15 seconds or less between lightning and thunder; for onsite activities electrical storms are considered close when lightening is visible.

2.2.1 Storms Forecast

Ensure the Coolamatong Activity Instructor is aware of response plan in the event of close electrical activity.

Check forecast and actual conditions prior to commencing any activity. Activity must be cancelled or postponed if there appears to be an immediate threat.

2.2.2 Storms eventuating

On –site Activities:

- Move all participants off and away from the water if electrical activity is becoming or has become close.
- Move back to sheltered buildings if possible.
- If not possible to return to buildings move to low lying ground and avoid single large trees.

Expeditions:

- Avoid peaks, ridges and high exposed ground.
- Avoid shelter under large individual trees.
- Look for shelter in low lying ground or in broad areas of small uniform trees.
- Brief students on the Safety Position

2.3 HEAT/COLD

2.3.1 Heat Exposure - Predicted Temperature over 28°C AND every day Term 1 & 4

- Ensure all participants (including Coolamatong and School Staff) have a hat, sunscreen and ample water. Plan to spend most of the hot part of the day (11-3) in the shade.
- Recommend school staff to adopt a “No hat, no outdoor activity” policy – students without hats should be asked to complete alternative activities, whilst still being supervised, in the shade.
- Wear clothing that protects the upper arms and shoulders.
- Wear wrap-around sunglasses (highly recommended – not compulsory) that meet Australian safety standards.
- Wear a hat that shades the face and neck. All participants are encouraged to wear broad brimmed hats as opposed to peaked caps.
- Using SPF30+ broad spectrum sunscreen which is reapplied every 2 hours or as per manufacturer’s specifications. Sunscreen should be readily available.
- Coolamatong Staff are required to wear sun smart clothing at all times whilst outside. Sun smart clothing items include sleeved tops and hats. Cut away tops, singlets or sleeveless tops (leaving shoulders, upper arms and backs exposed to the sun) are not acceptable, even during non-teaching periods.

2.3.2 During Activities

- Monitor group wellbeing, and complete activities in the shade where possible.
- Activity leader may shorten or cease activity if he/she observes participants to be affected by heat in any way.
- Increase water breaks and encourage students/staff to bring water bottles.
- Lower intensity of activities, shorten activity and modify levels of physical exertion.
- If out on expedition, walk during the cool parts of the day if possible
- Modify activities with more rest periods, shorter length and travel in the cooler part of the day activities with more rest periods, shorter length and travel in the cooler part of the day

2.3.3 Extreme Heat

No strenuous physical activity is to take place over 34°C. All outdoor activities cease above 38°C.

Sports Medicine Australia is available to provide more information on the effects of strenuous activity according to temperature.

2.3.4 Extreme Cold

While it is unlikely for any conditions to qualify as extreme cold it is possible for campers to develop hypothermia around water when air temperature is low and wind chill is high.

Coolamatong Activity leaders should monitor group wellbeing and pay attention for any camper who is showing signs of hypothermia and apply first aid as appropriate. If participants are becoming wet in cold and windy conditions it is recommended to either provide time to dry and change, shorten the activity or cease the activity altogether.

2.4 BUSHFIRE

2.4.1 CFA defined trigger points for Fire Danger Ratings

RATING	Recommended Action for Households	Recommended Action for Outdoor Activities
CODE RED (Catastrophic) (FDI 100+)	If you live in a bushfire prone area the safest option is to leave the night before, or early in the morning.	Leave the area the night before or early in the morning. If this is not practical, take immediate action to protect the group. Practise or remind the group about behaviour in the event of a threat from fire.
EXTREME (FDI 75-99)	The safest option is to leave early in the day if you live in a bushfire prone area and your Bushfire Survival Plan is to leave. Only stay if your home is well prepared, well-constructed and you can actively defend it.	Leave the area the night before or early in the morning. If this is not practical, take immediate action to protect the group. Practise or remind the group about behaviour in the event of a threat from fire.
SEVERE (FDI 50-74)	The safest option is to leave early in the day if you live in a bushfire prone area and your Bushfire Survival Plan is to leave. Only stay if your home is well prepared and you can actively defend it.	If your activity is in a bushfire prone area consider leaving early in the day. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remind group of the location and route to your severe weather site. • practise or remind the group about behaviour in the event of a threat from fire. • reassess the likelihood of meeting the goals of the activity • re-evaluate route selection and evacuation options • re-evaluate campsite choices • ensure procedures are modified to account for the heightened fire risk
VERY HIGH (FDI 25-49)	If you live in a bushfire prone area and your Bushfire Survival Plan is to leave, the safest option is to leave at the beginning of a day.	If your activity is in a bushfire prone area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reassess the likelihood of meeting the goals of the activity • re-evaluate route selection and evacuation options • re-evaluate campsite choices • ensure procedures are modified to account for the heightened fire risk e.g. meals that do not require cooking, waste disposal, campsite procedures • practise or remind the group about behaviour in the event of a threat from fire.
HIGH (FDI 12-24)	Check your Bushfire Survival Plan	Review your activity plan including severe weather sites, particularly those for bushfires
LOW– MODERATE (FDI 0-11)	Check your Bushfire Survival Plan	Review your activity plan including severe weather sites.

2.4.2 Camp Coolamatong Bushfire Preparation:

On arrival

All groups are led through a safety briefing and a demonstration of the emergency signal and where the designated Assembly Area is for each campsite within the first 15 minutes of arriving at Coolamatong.

Lake Camp Assembly Area – Deck – adjacent Dining Hall

Farm Camp Assembly Area – Volleyball Court on front oval

Weather Conditions and Fire Danger Ratings

Each day the Coolamatong Program Manager will be checking forecasted weather conditions and Fire Danger Ratings including Total Fire Bans for that day. A decision to modify or cancel activities need to be

made in consultation with the Coolamatong Program Manager, the school’s Teacher in Charge. They will consider the forecast in conjunction with:

- Area of intended program
- Nature of the activity
- Wind direction & speed
- Capacity to add more instructors to the group

RATING	Guidelines for Campsite	Guidelines for Outdoor Activities
CODE RED (Catastrophic) (FDI 100+)	Evacuate the campsite 24hours/ the day prior when... If it is unsafe and not possible to evacuate the Coolamatong Farm Camp Dining Hall has been designated as the Refuge Area.	
EXTREME (FDI 75-99)	Consider evacuating site based on weather conditions forecasted, fires in the area and number of extreme rating days predicted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All activities cancelled. • Expeditions cancelled , any overnight expeditions evacuated back to Coolamatong
SEVERE (FDI 50-74)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expeditions cancelled , any overnight expeditions evacuated back to Coolamatong • Land based modified or cancelled • Water based activities reviewed or modified
VERY HIGH (FDI 25-49)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most activities are able to continue some may be modified based of weather forecast • Bushcraft modified or cancelled • Offsite expeditions modified
HIGH (FDI 12-24)	Monitor conditions	
LOW– MODERATE (FDI 0-11)	Monitor conditions	

Fire Season Preparation:

Camp Coolamatong will undertake the necessary preparation of site prior to the fire danger period coming into effect. This includes the maintenance of all fire-fighting equipment, reduction of fuel around the site and accessibility of equipment.

Total Fire Ban Day

All fire-fighting equipment and fire preparation boxes is checked against the checklist to ensure all gear is present. If anything is missing it is replaced immediately.

2.4.3 Emergency Response Plan in the event of immediate fire front

Evidence of a bush fire will be:

- warning that a fire is approaching;
- a dense cloud of smoke approaching;
- a strong smell of smoke;

Phase 1: Raising the alarm

- Sound the alarm (continuous for at least one minute – take outside dining hall to sound)
- Phone fire brigade 5156 6548 or 0459 182 397
- Contact Coolamatong Director (0408 603 098)

Phase 2: Assemble Group for roll call

- All people on site proceed immediately to Assembly Area – Volleyball Court (Farm Camp) or Deck – Dining Area (Lake Camp) following designated emergency evacuation route. If unable to proceed to Assembly Area go directly to Refuge Area – Farm Camp Dining Hall (deemed the appropriate refuge area by local CFA)
- Delegate School Staff Member in charge or Holiday Camp Director to collect camper list, medical forms and camper medications.
- Coolamatong Program Manager to collect Fire Management Folder
- At Assembly Area check roll and confirm list with leaders.
- The priority at all times is the safety and welfare of human life;
- Do not return to bunkrooms, buildings or tents to retrieve valuables;
- Identify any campers not accounted for and inform Coolamatong Director.

Phase 3: Seek Refuge

- Proceed to Refuge area when everyone is accounted for - Farm Camp Dining Hall;
- Do not wait for any 'missing' camper (the director will authorise specific leaders or camp staff to locate and move them to refuge).
- Keep designated leaders with groups and remain in refuge area until notified by Coolamatong Director.

Phase 4: Waiting

- Do not send any person out of refuge to perform a task unless authorised by Coolamatong Director.
- Reassure campers and wait calmly for further instructions.
- Fill emergency fire buckets with water.

Phase 5: Leaving Refuge

Do not leave refuge until:

- Told to do so by Coolamatong Director or Emergency Services.
- When the 'all clear' is given by director move group to assembly area or other area as directed and wait for further instructions.