



Botanic Gardens Trust Community Education Unit School Excursions Risk Management Overview

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Risk Management Overview developed by: Community Education Officers – Schools Program in consultation with Janelle Hatherly – Manager Public Programs, Caz McCallum and Rob Smith, Branch Directors at Mount Annan Botanic Garden, Mount Tomah Botanic Garden respectively.

Hazard Location: Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney, Mount Annan Botanic Garden, Mount Tomah Botanic Garden

Activities: School Excursions

Introduction

As with all public spaces there are inherent dangers associated with the natural and urban environment. The Botanic Gardens Trust takes staff, visitor and contractor safety seriously and carries out risk assessment on all Trust activities. The Trust identifies, assesses and quantifies the risk involved in activities carried out on its estates including the school excursion component of the Community Educational Unit. To date, there have been no major safety issues involving school students or teachers at the estates of the Botanic Gardens Trust and minor medical issues have been addressed efficiently in accordance with the Botanic Garden Trust Safe Work Method practices.



Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS)

Staff involved in delivering the activities develop Safe Work Method Statements (SWMS) incorporating safety control measures in order to minimise identified risks. The SWMS developed by the Community Education Unit are site specific and relevant to school excursions. These include *Leading a Group*; *Gardening with Children in Botanic Gardens*, and *Experiencing Plants with the Senses*.

All these activities scored risk ratings of less than 35/100 once identified actions to minimise risks were determined. This value falls within the Trust's 'LOW' risk rating percentile.

It should be noted that all school excursions take place in the presence of qualified Trust educators and accompanying school teachers have 'Duty of Care' for their students. Student ratios for Gardens lessons are in accordance with the DET Excursion Policy ratio: a minimum of 1 teacher for 30 students – primary and secondary throughout the session.

Risk Reduction Control Measures for school excursions at the botanic estates of the Botanic Gardens Trust, Sydney are:

- Trust staff are trained and experienced in delivering outdoor education safely.
- The Trust has Senior First Aid Officers on site and all Community Education Officers taking lessons maintain current First Aid Certificates.
- The NSW DET School Excursion Policy is supported and supervising teacher (State or Independent Schools) on excursions must be able to administer first aid (CPR & Emergency Care).
- Accompanying teachers supervise their students in accordance with DET policy.
- Community Education's teaching staff have first aid kits on hand and are in radio/mobile communication at all times.
- All students are advised to wear sun protection and conduct themselves in a safe and caring manner whilst in the Gardens.
- Regular site inspections are undertaken by Trust staff.
- At the commencement of lessons, students and teachers are briefed on the specific risk associated with their upcoming lesson and the appropriate actions they will need to perform to minimise the risks.
- The Trust has OH&S Policies and Procedures that are followed to ensure staff, visitor and contractor safety.
- The Community Education Unit reviews their 'Safe Work Method Statements' on a regular basis. These are signed off by the Manager Public Programs.
- All staff involved with visiting school groups undertake safety 'Tool Box Talks' amongst themselves beforehand and with students at the start of each session.