

Maroon Outdoor Education Centre

GROUPING STUDENTS

The manner in which the students are grouped for camp will have an effect on the program options and the program outcomes. When deciding on how to group your students you must consider:

- the planned outcomes of the program;
- the preferred activities for the program;
- the fitness of the staff and students;
- the medical issues of the staff and students;
- the response times in case of emergency.

Program outcomes and grouping students:

It is important to consider how to group students and what effect grouping might have on the outcomes of the program. For example:

1. A program with strong links to classroom learning will be better achieved if the students are in a ***Class Group*** with their classroom teacher.
2. A program that is focussed on setting and meeting challenges will be more effective if the students have ***Program Choice*** and can choose the level or type of challenge that they wish to meet. These groups must be verified by a teacher to ensure that students are appropriately placed in terms of fitness and medical issues.
3. A program with a social focus may use a ***Buddy System*** or be ***Teacher Directed*** to allow for more deliberate social grouping.

Advanced Bushwalks

These groups must be specifically selected. All students and staff require a high level of fitness and no major medical issues. Please refer to ***A Guide to Medical Conditions*** and ***Campout and Bushwalk Guide***.

Equity and Access:

The Anti-Discrimination Act serves to *promote equality of opportunity for everyone by protecting them from unfair discrimination*. We must provide all students with the opportunity to be included in the program activities.

The number of students and teachers in each group

If the number of students in a group exceeds 24 or the total number of students and teachers/adults exceeds 25 in any group, program options can be limited. These limitations are due to risk management and logistical factors.

Some Grouping Options

There are many ways to group students for outdoor education programs. It is important to consider the effect that each method could have on the program. Some methods are explained below:

Class Group

Students remain in their class group for the program. The class teacher is typically with the class. This arrangement provides good connections with classroom learning and behaviour management.

Participant Identification

Participants are identified as being suitable to a program. Programs focussing on leadership and behaviour modification will typically use this method. Participants are invited and may be required to submit an applicant or participate in an interview to gain admission to the program.

Buddy System

Students select a buddy with whom they will be grouped. These two students will then be allocated to a group by the program coordinator.

Program Choice

Students identify the program in which they would like to participate. Students are usually asked to provide a number of preferences. Choices can be based on:

- The aims of the program (eg. working together, personal challenge)
- The activities offered (eg. bushwalking, canoeing, mountain biking)
- The level of challenge (eg. introductory expeditions; advanced climbing)

Providing students with choice in grouping or program selection can be very empowering. Be sure to plan for the student that doesn't get their choice. This student is the student who will try to opt out of a program because "I didn't choose this. I wanted to do that other program".

Teacher choice

Students are placed in to groups or programs by the teachers.

Student choice

Students select their own groups.

Role Model

A process that has been used in behaviour modification programs. Participants are asked to identify a student that they think demonstrates appropriate behaviours. They must justify their selection and the "role model" is vetted by the program staff. The "role model" students are invited to take part in the program.