

25. While boards of trustees must ensure the health and safety of all involved in EOTC, they cannot achieve this without the help of everyone involved.

### ▶ **How everyone can contribute to EOTC safety**

26. The NZ SOLE<sup>4</sup> sailboat in Figure 1.2 shows how the sailboat is steered, propelled, stabilised and supported by different groups of people. To achieve safe outdoor learning experiences, everyone needs to work together, just like sailing a real boat. So all groups involved in EOTC have shared, not sole, responsibility for safety, with each group responsible for different aspects.

#### *Students*

are the mainsail. Their learning of safe practices, knowledge and skills through EOTC, drives the experience. Involving students in planning, organising and implementing safe practices, impacts significantly on the safety of the activity.

#### *Teachers and/or instructors*

are the tiller and rudder. They plan and steer the desired course and respond appropriately to changing conditions and obstacles, to maintain safety during the activity. Their judgement, based on experience, is critical to safety. Therefore, it is imperative these people are competent for the job.

#### *Parents and other volunteer helpers*

are the spinnaker. Their involvement can be unpredictable. If appropriately selected and briefed, they can become a strong and well-trimmed spinnaker that maximises the performance of the boat. If not, they may become a sloppy, flapping spinnaker that blows out, hampering the boat's performance or sabotaging it completely.

#### *Board of trustees, government and professional agencies*

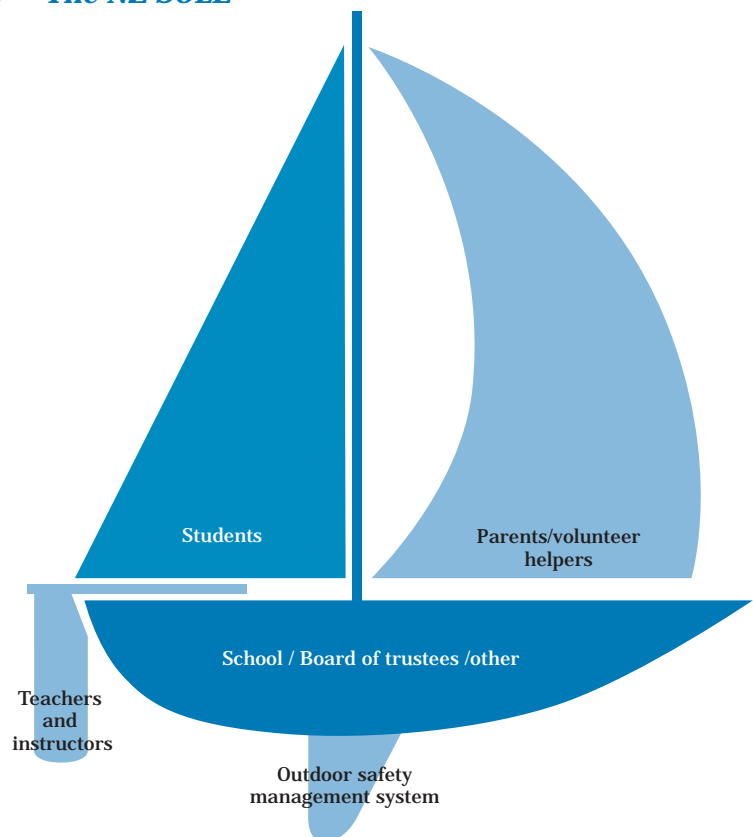
form the hull. They provide the policy structure and framework to support the process of safe outdoor learning experiences.

A robust outdoor safety management system that involves everyone in the safety process, is the keel that stabilises the entire programme and prevents capsizing.

### ▶ **Responsibilities**

27. The lists on pages 12-15 outline the responsibilities of key groups towards achieving the overall goal of safe outdoor learning experiences.

### ▶ **The NZ SOLE**



**Figure 1.2** NZ SOLE (Safe Outdoor Learning Experiences).

<sup>4</sup> Periam, G. (2002). Safety, A shared responsibility. Education Today 1 (1) 2002.

## ▶ **RESPONSIBILITIES OF BOARDS OF TRUSTEES**

28. These responsibilities are consistent with National Administration Guidelines (NAGs) 1 and 5; the Health and Safety in Employment Act, 1992; the *Health and Safety Code of Practice for State Primary, Composite, and Secondary Schools*; and accepted best practice. Boards of trustees must ensure safety in three major areas.

### ▶ **Staff competence and best practice<sup>5</sup>**

- Staff competence is assessed against best practice (see Section 7).
- Only competent staff are approved to lead EOTC activities.
- If the required competence is not available in the school, outside expertise is contracted *or* the activity is modified to ensure safety.
- Volunteer supervisors should have the appropriate skills, knowledge and/or experience for their assigned role.
- Contractors, parents and volunteers have been checked for their suitability to work with children (see Section 5, paragraphs 87-89).
- All staff, contractors, volunteer assistants and students are involved in safety management planning and have been instructed in health and safety procedures to be used during EOTC events.
- All staff/volunteers/students apply the environmental care code (see Appendix III).
- Staff development opportunities ensure staff have safety skills and knowledge required to run activities they are responsible for.

### ▶ **Health and safety procedures**

- The board understands legal requirements (see Section 6).
- The school has health and safety procedures and these are implemented.
- All actual or potential hazards are identified and eliminated, isolated, or minimised by the application of appropriate safety management procedures (for example, risk analysis management system (RAMS) or safety action plan (SAP). See Appendix V, forms 12 and 13).
- Responsibility for EOTC has been assigned to a competent staff member or members (EOTC co-ordinator or committee).
- Any hazards reported to the board in writing, shall be acted upon appropriately.
- A register of accidents that either harmed or might have harmed any employee, volunteer or student is maintained (see accident recording, reporting and investigating in Section 7, paragraphs 133-139).
- Emergency/crisis management procedures and a policy for dealing with the media about EOTC incidents are in place and staff are familiar with them (see Section 7, paragraphs 142-146).
- An annual review of the school's safety management systems is completed, including a review of incidents/accidents/near misses<sup>6</sup>. (See Section 7, paragraphs 140-141).
- Staff are supported with time and resources to pre-visit EOTC sites in the planning stages of an event.

### ▶ **Equipment**

- All circumstances and activities for which safety equipment should be used are identified.
- All facilities used for EOTC meet accepted best practice.
- All equipment and safety clothing is stored securely and its use controlled. Distribution is supervised and regular inventories are made.
- Safety equipment or clothing is provided to safeguard all staff/volunteers/students from any danger to their health and safety.
- All persons use safety clothing and/or equipment when required.
- All safety equipment complies with any relevant New Zealand standard or code of practice, gives adequate protection from the risk it is designed to eliminate or minimise, and is adequately maintained.
- A usage and maintenance log is kept for safety equipment (see Appendix V, Sample Form 20, for an example of a rope usage log).
- All goods, materials, substances and equipment are stored, secured, and kept so that they do not endanger people in their vicinity. Employees and students who may be responsible for these are fully instructed about their safe use and storage in accordance with any specific regulations, standards, or codes of practice, for example, stove fuel.
- A communication system is available to staff involved in EOTC activities (for example, telephone, cell phone, radio) with an alternative in place if there is no coverage.

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix I, Glossary.

<sup>6</sup> See Appendix I, Glossary.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EOTC CO-ORDINATOR**

29. This person should be a teacher with a strong interest in EOTC and experience relevant to that school's EOTC programme. Responsibilities cover three major areas.

### **Staff competence and best practice**

- Staff competence for leading EOTC activities is assessed against accepted best practice (see Section 7). Only competent staff are approved to lead EOTC activities.
- EOTC staff are informed, trained, and supervised so that safety in EOTC activities is assured.
- Each student participating in an EOTC activity has access to a qualified first-aider.
- Roles and responsibilities have been clarified, written up and agreed to when anyone (including a volunteer) is placed in a supervisory or instructional role with students (see Appendix V, sample forms 10 and 16).
- All staff in charge of EOTC check the safety of their activity, venue and staff/volunteers involved, before the activity. (See Appendix V, sample forms 3 and 9).
- An inventory of potentially hazardous<sup>7</sup> activities is kept, including sites/locations used and appropriately experienced/qualified staff who have been approved to run each activity.
- The EOTC coordinator/committee is familiar with these guidelines.

### **Health and safety procedures**

- A school policy on health and safety in EOTC is in place (usually incorporated in EOTC policy and/or health and safety policy).
- All practicable steps<sup>8</sup> have been taken to ensure the physical and emotional safety (including cultural safety) of students and staff involved in EOTC.
- All hazards relevant to the EOTC event have been identified and eliminated, isolated, or minimised by the application of appropriate safety management procedures (for example, RAMS or SAP. See Appendix V, forms 12 and 13).
- Hazards relevant to the EOTC event that cannot be easily eliminated, isolated, or minimised have been reported in writing to the board of trustees, for them to act upon appropriately.
- All accidents/incidents/near misses are recorded in the school's accident/incident register, reflected on and appropriately responded to.
- The safety and emergency procedures for each EOTC activity are identified and conveyed to all staff, volunteers and students.
- Safety procedures are outlined in the EOTC safety management system.
- School off-site procedures are implemented (for example, intentions left with contact person: ratios adhered to).
- School policies are implemented (for example, code of conduct for staff and students, EOTC policy, transportation policy).
- Where there is a deviation from the policy, there is clear documentation of the reasons for it, and how it is being managed.
- An emergency information sheet listing all health information and emergency contact details is compiled for staff and volunteers responsible for students on each EOTC activity (see Appendix V, sample form 8).

### **Equipment**

- In conjunction with the board of trustees, safety equipment for EOTC is specified and used.
- First-aid kits<sup>9</sup> are accessible and available on all EOTC activities.
- Hazardous substances are correctly stored, labelled and transported.
- Equipment logs are kept and when equipment has reached the accepted use-by date, it is retired (see Appendix V, sample form 20).
- Equipment is appropriately stored and repaired as required.
- There is a communication system in place to facilitate actions during an emergency.
- Protocols are in place for food, water, waste, flora and fauna.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix I, Glossary for definition of significant hazard.

<sup>8</sup> See Appendix I, Glossary.

<sup>9</sup> See NZMSC Outdoor First Aid Manual for first-aid kit contents lists.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF A TEACHER LEADING EOTC ACTIVITIES**

30. Teachers also have responsibilities in three main areas.

### **Staff competence and best practice**

- Teachers have assessed their own competence against accepted best practice before planning begins and had their decision peer/expert reviewed. Saying “no” to leading an activity is an accepted and respected response.
- Students are instructed in appropriate safety procedures and rehearse them.
- Students experience ‘challenge by choice’<sup>10</sup> (that is, not forced to participate).
- Teachers are familiar with this EOTC guide.
- Parents, volunteers, students and staff are briefed regarding event objectives, specific roles and responsibilities of all parties, code of conduct, safety management, including contingency plans, and relevant school policies.
- Leaders understand the safety requirements of all activities they are responsible for and have determined any special care that should be taken by themselves, other staff or volunteers and by the students.
- Teachers have assessed the needs and capabilities of the students against the demands of the activity and made any necessary adjustments to the programme.
- Due care is taken of the environment in accordance with the Environmental Care Code (see Appendix III) for example, all waste is disposed of responsibly.
- Activities are sequenced using a progressive acquisition of skills and/or knowledge to ensure safe participation.

### **Health and safety procedures**

- Educational goals that meet student needs are established for the EOTC activity at the outset of planning.
- All practicable steps<sup>11</sup> have been taken to ensure their own safety and the safety of other staff/volunteers and students while on EOTC activities. No action or inaction on their part causes harm to any other person.
- Provide cultural safety for students by being sensitive to, respectful of, and planning for, different cultural practices.
- Inform other staff and volunteers of cultural practices pertaining to the group and the need to respect them.
- Students are involved in safety management planning.
- Learning outcomes related to students taking appropriate responsibility for their own physical and emotional safety are met.
- Consent<sup>12</sup> is obtained from parents for student involvement in EOTC activities that extend outside normal school hours and/or involve more than a minimal level of risk.
- Hazards, such as unsafe equipment and practices, are reported in writing to the EOTC co-ordinator.
- All significant hazards have been eliminated where possible, or isolated and reported to the EOTC coordinator on safety management planning forms, for example, RAMS or SAP (see Appendix V, sample forms 12 and 13).
- Where elimination or isolation is not practicable, any remaining significant hazard has been minimised and reported via the safety management planning form to the EOTC co-ordinator, bearing in mind that the EOTC activity may be stopped if the hazard is not adequately controlled.
- All incidents/accidents/near misses have been reported in the school’s incident/accident register, as specified in the school policy.
- Appropriate contingency plans are in place.
- Students’ needs and hazards (educational, cultural, health, medical, food, behavioural) are identified and managed.

### **Equipment**

- Appropriate safety equipment and clothing is used when needed.
- Safety procedures for specific activities/equipment are known.
- Equipment logs are referred to before any equipment is used.
- First-aid kits, emergency equipment and a means of communication are taken on the event and all staff and students know their locations. (Note – there is no cell phone coverage in many parts of rural New Zealand.)
- All equipment is returned to storage clean and in good repair; usage and repair logs are completed.
- Food and drink are taken regularly to maintain energy levels.

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix I, Glossary.

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix I, Glossary.

<sup>12</sup> See Appendix I, Glossary.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STUDENTS**

**31.** Students involved in EOTC activities have some basic responsibilities for their own safety and the safety of others. It is recommended that a code of conduct (set of rules and strategies) be written to cover this. It needs to be done in conjunction with the students, staff, and helpers involved. If special rules apply to a particular activity, they should be explained at the start of the activity concerned.

An EOTC safety code of conduct could include the following:

- Take an active part in writing and implementing this code of conduct.
- Begin activity only when instructed.
- Touch potentially hazardous substances or equipment only if/when told to do so.
- Avoid behaviour that could lead to accidents/incidents.
- Confine long hair and loose clothing during activities where they are a hazard.
- Know what to do and co-operate fully in an emergency.
- Eat and drink regularly to maintain energy levels.
- Use equipment appropriately and take care to minimise damage or loss.
- Wear the appropriate clothing at all times.
- Report any faulty, ill-fitting equipment to the teacher or instructor in charge.
- Report any incident to the teacher or instructor in charge immediately.
- Carry out your buddy/group responsibilities to the best of your ability – look after one another. Stay together and stay put if lost.
- Challenge yourself within your personal limits (physical/psychological); Support others to do the same; refrain from pressuring others.
- Question your teacher, instructor or leader if you feel unsafe or see any unsafe practices in an EOTC activity you are involved in.
- Always participate in EOTC activities under supervision.
- Follow the environmental care code (Appendix III).
- Treat all equipment and the environment as taonga.<sup>13</sup>

(See also: Appendix V, sample form 7, student contract.)

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix I, Glossary.

## Summary

**32.** Safety is more than something teachers “do” to students. All involved in an EOTC activity should be aware of and take an active part in safety management procedures. This includes students, teachers, outdoor leaders, volunteer helpers and boards of trustees. While all involved are responsible for different aspects of safety management, together they contribute to comprehensive coverage of safety issues.

**33.** Involving students in safety management planning and procedures is essential. This allows students to have input, motivates them to think about safety issues in a meaningful way and

creates ownership. Student involvement in safety management must be in keeping with their age and level of knowledge and skill in the activity. Ultimately an individual student needs to be responsible for his/her behaviour. In EOTC situations, students must be aware of this responsibility at all times.

**34** While teachers and outdoor leaders may involve students in safety management procedures, ultimate responsibility for safety belongs to the board and the teacher in charge. Therefore, they must make all final calls and decisions that are critical to safety.

