ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITIES

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

Guidance for
Moray Education Establishments

CONTENTS

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Activity Centres (Young Persons' Safety) Act 1995 and the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004 require Moray Council to hold a license for the delivery of adventure activities.

1.2 Adventure activities involving young people need to be carefully planned and managed. These Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) build on the 'Going Out There' framework and Moray Council's Guidance to Off Site Excursion. The SOP give additional advice and guidance to enable excursions that include Adventure Activities to comply with the legal requirements of Moray Council's Adventure Activities License (AAL). The advice and guidance also reflects current best practice for adventure activities.

For further information about AALA go to http://www.hse.gov.uk/aala/index.htm.

1.3 **Definition of Adventure Activities** Adventure activities can be defined as activities with a level of perceived risk for which leaders would normally require specialist training and/or qualifications. There are four broad groups of activities that are covered under the AALA license. These are:

a. **Trekking** The most familiar trekking activities include hill walking, mountaineering, fell running, orienteering, pony trekking, off-road cycling and off-piste skiing.

b. **Watersports** All watersports, including kayaking, open canoeing, sailing, wind surfing, surfing, water ski-ing, fishing, boat fishing and swimming in natural waters.

c. **Climbing** Climbing activities include rock climbing, abseiling, ice climbing, gorge walking, ghyll scrambling and sea level traversing.

d. **Caving** Caving is the exploration of underground passages using rock climbing or diving equipment.

1.4 **Approval of Adventurous Activities** EVOLVE allows a visit to be identified as Adventurous Activity. This notifies the Outdoor Learning Officer hat they need to provide a comment as Moray Council's Technical Expert. The Technical Expert may recommend that further planning or action is taken before the venture can be approved by the Head of Establishment before they can approve the visit.

1.5 In addition to the 4 AALA activities, Moray Council also includes any other activity of an adventurous nature where participants are likely to be more than 1 metre above the ground or over water, and where specialist equipment would normally be required to safeguard progress, as adventurous activities that need to be notified on EVOLVE. A list of some of the most common notifiable activities can be found at Moray Council's Outdoor Learning webpage.

1.6 Inevitably there will sometimes be a grey area at the boundary between what is an adventurous activity and what is not. In cases where staff are uncertain as to whether notification is required or simply seek additional assurance then the visit should be entered as Adventurous Activity on EVOLVE.

SECTION 2: PLANNING

2.1 **Planning Timescales** The planning and organisation of ventures that include Adventurous Activity is frequently carried out on a voluntary basis, either by members of staff working outwith contracted hours or by external volunteers. Therefore it is important that the Head of Establishment makes sufficient time and resources available to the people carrying out the planning process.

2,2 To allow time for the Technical Expert to review the activity plan, make his recommendation and allow the Visit Leader to answer any queries the following timescales for submitting EVOLVE requests are to be observed:

a. For local excursions including Adventurous Activity - 4 weeks before the excursion start date.

b. For other UK excursions (outside of the Grampian region and Cairngorm National Park) - 6 weeks before start date.

c. For excursions abroad - 12 weeks before the excursion start date.

2.3 **Safety Management** Safety has as its basis a sound framework of planning and organisation, coupled with the competence of staff and volunteers responsible for delivery and supervision. Competence in itself relies upon an appropriate mix of experience and training.

2.4 An intrinsic feature of outdoor learning is that everything may not always go according to plan. In addition, Adventurous Activity will always have an element of perceived risk that can have a beneficial impact on learning. It is important that risk and safety are managed to enable young people to have an experience that stretches their boundaries without endangering them. (For example: Climbing on a climbing wall is inherently safe when correct climbing systems and procedures are used. However young people new to climbing will feel the excitement of a perceived risk. If managed correctly they can feel empowered and in control. However, some young people may require a tighter rope and more encouragement to be able to succeed.) Therefore managing these activities needs safety systems that are adaptable and flexible. This relies on the training, experience and judgement of the staff supervising the activity. Guidance on the qualifications and/or experience required to lead each activity is included in this document.

2.5 **Risk Assessment** Risk assessments must be carried out for any planned adventurous activity. Moray Council guidance on preparing risk assessments is available at Appendix 5 to the Guidance for Off Site Excursion. EVOLVE contains links to generic risk assessments for each type of activity, which can be used as a basis to write the risk assessment for individual excursions or activities.

2.6 **Staff Competence** Competent leadership is an important safety factor. It is important that staff or volunteers supervising activities have had appropriate training for the organisation, leadership and supervision of off-site activities. The competencies and experience required to supervise an activity must be identified as part of the risk assessment process.

2.7 Competency to lead or supervise an adventurous activity should be evaluated within two broad categories:

a. Personal skills or soft skills - judgement, leadership, organisation skills, coaching and interpersonal skills. Effective soft skills will enable participants to be safer, enjoy the activity and learn more.

b. Technical skills or hard skills - skills required to perform an activity (such as navigation, belaying or kayaking).

2.8 Qualifications and awards provide a useful measure of technical skill. National Governing Bodies (NGB) of outdoor sports and adventurous activities administer schemes of training for coaches, instructors, and leaders. NGB schemes provide the preferred form of training for staff and volunteers. Most awards are not valid unless the holder also holds a valid first aid certificate. Moray Council also endorses some other technical training courses (such as the DofE Expedition Skills course). Lists of schemes and qualifications are included in the relevant section of this document.

2.9 The Adventure Activity License requires establishments to keep records of staff and volunteer competences/qualifications relating to their adventurous/outdoor activities. Moray Council policy is for these records, including copies of certificates, to be uploaded and stored on EVOLVE. EVOLVE will automatically add these qualifications when a member of staff in added to a visit request. If qualifications have not been previously recorded on EVOLVE, the Visit leader will need to add these details when raising an EVOLVE visit.

2.10 **Using External Providers** Where the provision of adventurous activities is contracted to an Approved Activity Providers then the provider's own safety management system and operating procedures will apply.

2.11 Moray Council maintains a list of Approved external providers of Adventurous Activities, know as Approved Activity Providers (AAP). This list can be found on EVOLVE and Moray Council's Outdoor Learning web page. Registered providers will have been checked by the Council to ensure that their safety management systems and quality of provision meet the required standards. Individual establishments do not need to request copies of safety management documentation from these providers.

2.12 Heads of Establishments or party leaders wishing to use non-registered providers should contact the Technical Expert before any booking commitments are made.

2.13 **Communication** Visit Leaders must consider a plan for effective communication between the Visit Leader, the activity supervisor and the group, especially if the activity is to be carried out in a rural or remote location. All group members should understand the communication plan and know how to contact each other in the event of an incident or emergency. The communication plan must also include the Base Contact.

2.14 If the group will be in a remote area consideration must be given to how to manage communications in the event that no mobile signal is available. The group must be briefed on any procedures to follow. If operating in very remote areas for extended periods of time consideration should also be given to other forms of communication.

2.15 **First Aid Provision** The validity of the activity leader's and supervisor's qualifications will be dependent on having an appropriate and current first aid certificate. Details of the relevant qualifications can be found in this document.

2.16 **Water Safety & Rescue Training** Supervisors with watersport qualifications must also maintain currency in the safety and rescue skills applicable to their qualifications and the activity being undertaken. Details of the qualifications relevant to specific water activities can be found in this document.

2.17 **Insurance** Visit Leaders should advise staff and parents/guardians to ensure that the travel insurance policy they purchase provides appropriate cover for the activities to be undertaken.

2.18 **Establishing Supervision Ratios** Guidance on minimum supervision ratios for each type of activity can be found in the relevant section of this document These supervision ratios may need to be reduced dependent on other factors identified during the site specific risk assessment.

2.19 **Parental Consent and Medical Information** Adventurous Activities are more likely to contain an element of risk and carried out in rural or remote areas. Therefore it is more important that parents/guardians are fully informed of planned activities. They should be given the information, on the activity, its benefits, risks and mitigations, required to enable them to make informed decisions before giving consent for their children to participate.

2.20 For the same reasons it is important that Visit Leaders and supervisors have up to date information on any medical issues, or other support needs, that participants have. When a participant needs medication, such as inhalers, antihistamine, or auto-injectors, supervising staff need to confirm that participants have sufficient quantities and confirm where they carry or store their medication. Where possible this information should be shared with other participants.

2.21 Visit Leaders are to ensure that Parental Consent Forms are completed before the excursion and copies are carried by supervising staff.

2.22 **Preparing Participants** Adventurous Activities offer a great opportunity for developing life skills; confidence, judgement, decision making, cooperation and resilience. In order to make the most of these opportunities, it is important that young people are adequately prepared for the activity. At the simplest level, this can be just making sure that participants are correctly dressed and have suitable footwear. It can include briefing them on the activities to help them adopt a positive mindset. It can also include training specific to the activity, such as paddling skills or completing a DofE training syllabus.

SECTION 3: SUPERVISION

3.1 **Introduction** Heads of Establishments and Visit Leaders are responsible for effective planning and delivery of any excursion. They must ensure that members of staff or volunteers supervising activities have the qualifications and currency required.

3.2 Activity Supervisors are responsible that they have the qualifications, experience and competence to lead the activity at that time and place (i.e. Are they sufficiently fit and rested? Do they have experience of the crag or stretch of water being used?).

3.3 It is essential that everyone involved in the excursion (staff and participants) understands the supervision arrangements and the expectations placed upon them. The following techniques can be used to aid management of groups:

a. Supervisors must ensure the team they are responsible for is within the limits of supervision ratios for their activity. For larger parties, where more than one team is taking part in the same activity, or series of activities, then a separate nominated individual should be in overall control to coordinate activity.

b. Supervisors must carry a nominal role of participants and supporting staff during the excursion. Head counts should be carried out at regular intervals; prior to and at the end of each activity or when moving from one location to another.

c. Participants should be informed of the itinerary and the location of rendezvous points if they become separated.

d. Staff supervision can be complemented by the use of a buddy system. Buddy systems, where participants are teamed up in twos or threes, are also useful for encouraging responsibility and developing a sense of community.

3.4 **Levels of Supervision** One of the aims of adventurous activities is to give young people a sense of independence and ownership of decision making. Supervisors need be flexible in the amount of supervision they give to teams to provide a balance between safety and allowing young people can take responsibility for their actions. The following definitions of levels of supervision are useful in assessing the support that a particular team needs. Note: Selecting the right level is a dynamic process and any team will require differing levels of supervision as an activity progresses.

a. **Direct Supervision** - The supervisor is in direct contact with the team. This works well when teaching or coaching new skills; for example introducing belaying techniques to a novice group. Direct supervision should also be considered for dealing with particular hazards, such as crossing a busy road.

b. **Close Supervision** - The supervisor steps away from the team, yet is close enough to observe them practicing skills. This gives young people a sense of freedom, whilst the supervisor retains the ability to step in if things start to go wrong.

c. **Remote Supervision** - The team are allowed to operate within clearly defined parameters. Supervisors are present in the area but not necessarily within sight of the team. This is highly effective in promoting independence, confidence and resilience. However, the team must have sufficient training for the activity and the supervisor must have confidence in the team's ability to act safely in the environment. The leader needs to aware of the team's location and must be able to react to potential hazards. The team must know how to contact the supervisor if needed. An example of remote supervision is a DofE group undertaking a qualifying expedition.

d. **Down Time** - Down time is time outside the programmed activity of an excursion. Participants should be allowed to relax, however supervising staff still have a duty of care for the group. This includes free time within an activity day or the evening of a residential trip. Staff need not be with the group but should be available to assist when required.

3.5 **Monitoring** To support safety management, Moray Council will regularly monitor Adventure Activity excursions to satisfy themselves that the guidance outlined in this document is being followed during the delivery of excursions and activities. A check sheet to aid montoring checks is at Appendix 6.

3.6 **Evaluation** It is important to evaluate the outcomes of a particular event in order to learn from the experience in order to improve future events.

SECTION 4: INCIDENTS DURING ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

4.1 Moray Council's policy for responding to Incident and Emergencies is discussed in the Guidance for Off-Site Excursion document. This section details additional actions that are specific to adventure activities.

4.2 Supervisors will use their training and experience to carry out dynamic risk assessment throughout the activities they are supervising. Their training will also help them manage minor incidents. However, they must ensure that the Visit Leader and/or Base Contact is informed of any incident.

4.3 **Team Overdue Procedure** Adventurous Activities are likely to be carried out at remote locations, away from the school, establishment or accommodation used for a residential visit. Therefore, it is important to establish routine contact between the supervisor and Visit Leader or Base Contact. Whilst the supervisor should ensure that he meets agreed contact times, the nature of outdoor activity means that delays are likely. Supervising staff must be aware of the procedure to be followed in the event of a group not making contact or returning to the activity base on time. The table below should be printed and used as a guide in conjunction with the Emergency Response Card (see Guidance for Off-Site Excursions Appendix 2).

TEAM OVERDUE PROCEDURE

It is important to use a systematic approach when responding to the late return of groups. This will ensure a balance between a calm reaction to simple delays and prompt reaction when an overdue return is thought to be the result of a serious incident.

The following procedures should be use to inform the response to an overdue team:
The party leader must make every effort to inform the Base Contact of any significant delay in order to prevent unnecessary worry and response.

Group overdue by:	Status	Actions & Response
No More than 1 Hour	Heightened awareness	General awareness raised – looking out for safe return. Telephone group leader and establish last known location if possible. Re-assure any concerned relatives.
No More than 2 Hours	Low key search	Initiate a low key search of general area where group are expected to be. Include location of any support vehicle (if used). Use local people/knowledge where possible. Confirm last known location. Treat as Level 2 incident.
No More than 4 Hours	Full scale response	Notify police and initiate a detailed search. Treat as Level 3 incident until further details are known.

Safe return of the group MUST be reported as soon as possible.

The group leader MUST contact the Base Contact by telephone as soon as possible when they know their group will be late returning and confirm safe arrival at their finish point or support vehicle.
A timely phone call will forestall an unnecessarily vigorous response to a delayed return.

Where groups are operating in remote locations, with a travel time of more than 30 mins between the activity venue (or support vehicle) and base, expected time of return should be based on the end of activity or return to the vehicle time (not the return to base time). This will prevent unnecessary delays in initiating an appropriate response.

SECTION 5: ADVENTURE ACTIVITY EQUIPMENT

Technical Equipment

5.1 Technical equipment is defined as the equipment that enables an activity to take place by mitigating identified in accordance with best practice and risk assessments for the activity. The term includes Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as helmets, floatation devices and climbing harnesses. It also includes equipment used for protecting an activity such as climbing ropes, belay devices and other items of protection gear.

5.2 Although not specifically defined as technical equipment within AALA regulations the following items owned by Moray Council or its Establishment are subject to the checks detailed in para 19.3 and 19. 4:

a. Pedal cycles, and trailers.

b. Canoes and Kayaks, including paddles and oars.

c. Climbing and bouldering walls.

5.3 **Fit for Purpose** All technical equipment used in the delivery of adventurous activities must be designated as 'Fit for Purpose' by an appropriately qualified person. This includes approval by a Technical Expert appointed by Moray Council when new items are purchased.

5.4 The designation of fit for purpose must also include regular maintenance by a qualified person approved by Moray Council and pre-use checks by a qualified supervisor. Clear policies must be in place to ensure that technical equipment is only issued to, and used under the supervision of, staff or volunteers who are appropriately qualified in its use.

5.5 **Care and Maintenance** Technical equipment including PPE must be:

a. Used and stored in accordance with the manufacturers recommendations and the activity's best practice.

b. Visually checked for condition by a qualified practitioner before each occasion of use and any defects reported to the equipment custodian.

c. Subject to formal periodic inspection in accordance with manufacturers guidance and industry best practice. This inspection must include a check that pre-use checks are being carried out effectively. Appropriate records of these checks must be kept for a period of 7 years. These records should include:

- Identifying marker.
- Date of purchase.
- Discard or End of life date (shelf or usage life as per manufacturer's guidelines).

- Checking and testing policy.
- Name and signature of employee/volunteer carrying out checks and tests.

d. To prevent inadvertent use, items that are found to be unserviceable must be removed from the equipment store.

e. Moray Council will maintain appropriate training records of employees/volunteers delegated with responsibility for storing, maintaining and issuing technical equipment.

5.6 Supervisors must ensure that PPE is fitted correctly before each participant takes part in the activity.

5.7 **Other Adventure Activity Equipment** Adventure activities use many items of equipment that fall out side the definition of technical equipment, but still need care and maintenance to ensure the comfort and safety of participants. This includes tents, rucksacks, sleeping bags, waterproofs and foot wear. Where such items are owned, or gifted to, Moray Council establishments, the establishment should adopt a policy to ensure the equipment is stored and maintained to an appropriate standard.

5.8 Where participants and/or assisting members of staff wish to use their own equipment, it must inspected and assessed as fit for purpose by the activity supervisor prior to the activity.

5.9 **External Providers** Where equipment is provided by an organisation on Moray Council's list of AAP, it may be assumed that appropriate checks and maintenance is in place. Where technical equipment, including cycles, canoes and kayaks, is to be hired or loaned from a non-approved provider it must be assessed by a Technical Expert appointed by Moray Council

PART TWO – ACTIVITY SPECIFIC GUIDANCE

SECTION ONE - INTRODUCTION

1.1 These Standard Operating Procedures have been designed to give guidance to staff that are involved in providing adventure activities in the context of their employment (either paid or voluntary) with Moray Council. This guidance should be read conjunction with Moray Council's Excursions Policy.

Risk Assessment

1.2 The Visit Leader and the activity supervisor(s) are responsible for ensuring adequate risk assessment has been carried out for each excursion involving adventure activities (see Excursions Policy Section 2).

1.3 Generic risk assessments for common adventurous activities are available at the links below:

- Walking/Hillwalking
- Expeditions/Wild Camping
- Mountaineering (summer only)
- Rock Climbing
- Climbing Wall Climbing
- Cycling (On and Off Road)
- Kayaking in Swimming Pools
- Kayaking in Inland Waters
- Surf kayaking
- Sea kayaking
- Canoeing
- Stand up Paddle Boarding (SUP)
- Swimming in Natural Waters
- Piste Skiing/Snowboarding
- Orienteering
- Other activities

1.4 These will provide a basis for assessing individual excursions/activities. Leaders must read the relevant assessment(s) and then:

a. Consider the specifics of the venture/activity and use the blank site specific template to add any additional hazards and risks specific to the activity, location, season or group composition.

b. Add the control measures required to mitigate the hazards identified.

c. Sign the bottom of the risk assessment document to confirm that risk assessment has been updated for the planned excursion. All supervising staff must read the risk assessment and be aware of the control measures to be put in place for the activity.

1.5 In cases where specific guidance is not available, the Visit Leader must contact Moray Council's Technical Expert for advice.

1.6 **Dynamic Risk Assessment** Dynamic Risk Assessment is fundament to maintaining a safe environment for young people taking part in adventure activities. It is a process of continually monitoring changing or developing circumstances, combined with a willingness to remain flexible and to adapt the activity to meet the needs of the circumstances. It relies on the knowledge and experience of supervising staff. Dynamic risk assessment must be used consistently by instructors, supervisors and assisting staff throughout the activity.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)

1.7 The SOPs provide a framework of rules and guidance within which Moray Council requires its staff, including registered volunteers, to operate when leading or instructing adventure activities. They reflect the recommended working practices of the National Governing Body (NGB) for each sport. The SOPs contain links to the relevant NGB and their award schemes.

1.8 Staff who hold leadership awards from a NGB, or other qualification recognised by Moray Council, must operate within the scope of their award. Staff must ensure that copies of their award certification are entered on their personal profile on EVOLVE.

1.9 Staff wishing to lead or adventurous activities who do not hold relevant NGB awards but who have appropriate experience must be assessed and signed off as competent by the Technical Expert.

SECTION TWO - WALKING AND HILLWALKING

General Information

2.1 As well as being a valid and valuable activity in its own right, walking forms the basis of many other adventurous activities, such as climbing, trail cycling and the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

2.2 **Definitions** This document uses the designations 'Low Level', 'Low Hills', and 'High Hills' to define different levels of terrain. Distinction is also made between summer and winter conditions. Summer conditions are defined as those where there is no snow or ice underfoot or forecast.

2.3 **DofE Expeditions** Walking excursions that include DofE practice or qualifying journeys must be notified on EVOLVE.

2.4 The NGB for walking activities is Mountain Training. More information on the NGB and their qualifying awards may be found at www.mountain-training.org.

Low Level Activities: up to approximately 300m

2.5 A considerable range of educational activity on foot takes place out of doors at Low Level. Much of this activity can be more appropriately considered as "off-site" activity, rather than adventurous activity. Whilst low level walking is generally considered to be a low risk activity there may be features or terrain encountered which can be hazardous, such as beaches, cliffs, ruined buildings, eroded paths, river banks etc. Leaders must be familiar with such hazards and evaluate the risks associated with them. Routes that include these features should be considered as notifiable activity.

2.6 Walking at Low Level can take place throughout the year, however serious consideration should be given to cancelling excursions when snow or ice is forecast.

2.7 **Training** Whilst no formal training is required to enable leaders to operate at low level, the terrain may require navigation and group management skills that would benefit from prior training and/or experience. Where the risk assessment or the nature of the activity indicates that a trained leader is required, the following qualifications are appropriate for Low Level routes:

a. The NGB's Lowland Leader qualification or Moorland Leader training course.

b. DofE Expedition Skills course.

Hillwalking on Lowhills: 300 - 600m

2.8 Most walking on 'Low Hills' (300 - 600metres approx.) is reasonably straightforward in summer conditions. However, hills of this height can still be hazardous and challenging at times, and require appropriate skills and leadership. Careful consideration needs to be given to the nature and remoteness of the terrain when carrying out risk assessments. Where the level of a planned walk is not clear, leaders should seek further advice from the Technical Expert.

2.8 Excursions on Low Hills terrain should only take place in summer conditions.

2.9 **Training** Staff leading parties on Low Hills must be suitably trained. The following qualifications are appropriate for Low Hills terrain:

a. The NGB's Lowland Leader or Moorland Leader qualification or Mountain Leader training course.

b. Holders of the NGB's legacy Walking Group Leader award.

c. DofE Expedition Skills course. This will be subject to selected routes and Moray Council have preplanned routes available for use with this award. Leaders considering other routes for this award are to contact the Technical Expert.

d. Holders of Moray Council's bespoke Lowhills award.

Hlillwalking on High Hills: Over 600m

2.10 High hills are invariably remote (i.e. more than 2km or 30 minutes from a metalled road or building). Because of the additional difficulties this would cause if an incident occurred, groups walking in High Hills must be supervised by an appropriately qualified person.

2.11 Excursions on High Hills terrain must not take place in winter conditions.

2.12 **Training** Supervisors for High Hills terrain must hold the NGB's Mountain Leader qualification or higher. Moray Council may approve supervisors with significant relevant experience on a case by case basis.

Guidance for Leaders

2.13 **Planning** Refer to the generic risk assessment for this activity. The following additional information must be considered:

a. All aspects of the planned walk should be appropriate to the needs and abilities of the participants, i.e. terrain, season, weather.

b. A detailed weather forecast for the area should be obtained prior to event. This should include a review of recent conditions and their effect on the terrain.

c. Details of the planned route, including estimated time of return, must be left with the Base Contact.

d. Where a route is planned to finish somewhere other than the starting point, transport arrangements should allow for a range of possibilities.

e. Contingency plans should be made, including possible alternative routes.

2.14 **Safety Procedures** The Visit Leader and supervising staff should carry out the following checks before and during the activity to maintain safety:

a. Prior to the activity taking place, the Visit Leader must review the plans and reassure themself that the plans are achievable and appropriate at that time, taking into consideration the experience and ability of the group, necessary equipment, weather and conditions underfoot and daylight hours available.

b. Party members must be briefed on the plan for the day, and should have an appropriate understanding of actions to be taken in the event of an emergency.

c. An equipment check should be made before the party leave their start point. If any member(s) of the party arrive inadequately clothed or equipped, plans must be re-evaluated to take this into account.

d. Supervising staff must maintain an ongoing awareness of the well-being of each individual in the party throughout the day. Particular attention should be given to the mindset and preparedness of members of the group at the start of the day.

e. The effects of the weather on the health and comfort of members of the party should be considered, e.g. extremes of heat and cold, wind chill, combination of wind and rain. Changes in the weather, both forecast and unexpected, should be responded to as appropriate.

f. Consideration should be given to the potential impact on the environment, other walkers and people who live or work in the area.

2.15 **Equipment and Clothing – Group Members** Participants should be advised of the equipment and clothing required for the excursion. Pre-prepared kit lists are a useful tool for informing participants and parents/guardians. Moray Council have prepared an example kit list which is available at Appendix 1. The equipment and clothing used should be in good condition and suitable for the event, taking into account terrain and time of year.

2.16 **Equipment - Group Equipment** In additional to participants' personal equipment and emergency equipment carried by the Leader, the following items should be carried as group equipment:

a. Group first aid kit.

b. Group shelter and/or survival bag.

c. Mobile phone or alternative method of communication.

d. Emergency rations of food and drink.

e. Spare torch and batteries.

2.17 **Equipment – Leaders** In addition to their own clothing and equipment, leaders and supervisors will need to carry equipment to deal with foreseeable incidents. Leaders should also consider carrying additional items to make up predictable shortcomings of any participant's own equipment. The amount of additional equipment that may be required will depend on the nature of the excursion.

2.18 **Supervision Ratios** The following supervision ratios are the maximum permissible for walking activities:

a. Low Level - 1:12

b. Low Hills (summer conditions) - 1:8

c. High Hills (summer conditions) - 1:7

d. High Hills (winter conditions) - 1:6

2.19 Supervision ratios must be informed by the site specific risk assessments made for the activity. Factors will include the nature of the group, terrain, weather conditions and experience of the supervising staff.

2.20 The size of any group and the strategies used must always allow the leader to remain in control and in effective contact with all members of the group. Where organisational constraints require large parties to operate in the same area they should be broken into manageable groups that can operate independently.

2.21 At least 2 members of staff should accompany any excursion. This will provide cover to respond to any safety or child protection incident. Exceptions to this guidance must be informed by a comprehensive risk assessment and will be informed by the training and experience of the leader and the experience of the party.

2.22 **Preparing Participants** All walking activities must be planned around the known capabilities of all members of the group. Where ambitious projects are planned, a systematic approach to preparing participants must be used. Training and preparation should be proportional to the nature of the activity and the level of terrain. Leaders should consider the following topics when preparing teams:

a. Physical fitness.

b. Technical abilities; map reading, use of the compass, comparing terrain on the map and in the landscape, calculating distances and timings, first aid, security on steep or uneven ground.

c. Actions in the event of an incident or accident (see below).

d. Mental preparation; so that participants can understand and deal with any predictable issues they may encounter.

2.23 **Supervision** The levels of supervision are discussed in Part 1 Section 3 of this document. Getting the balance to manage risks whilst enabling individuals to thrive requires experience and skill. The supervisor must always be aware of the location of their team and be able to react to any incident. The level of independence and freedom of movement that supervisors give to their team(s) will depend on the planned risk assessment and a dynamic assessment of the situation. This will usually require continuous, unobtrusive observation of the team.

2.24 All supervising staff and participants must know how to contact each other when required. This should include contact details for all staff and the team. For remote areas it is useful for participants to be aware of any mobile phone black spots. Emergency procedures should include escape routes to locations where phone coverage is available. Procedures should also include pre-planned meeting points. The use of mobile phones and radio transceivers is of value; however emergency plans should not rely on their use alone.

2.25 For safety reasons remotely supervised teams must contain between 4 and 8 persons.

2.26 **Indirect Supervision** When young people are to be supervised indirectly, such as during Duke of Edinburgh Award expeditions or fieldwork activities, supervising staff must be aware that they are still responsible for their team and the safety of all participants.

2.27 **Water Hazards** Water crossing should not be underestimated and should be only be contemplated where there are no significant risks. As a general rule, river or stream crossings should only be carried out when they can be achieved with a simple step across or are of no more than ankle depth and where the results of a slip are inconsequential.

2.28 When managing risks associated with water hazards, supervisors must operate within the scope of their training and experience. Leaders qualified to lead in Low Level or Low Hills terrain must stay within the guidance above. Leaders with a Mountain Leader Summer Award will have more training to assess the risks involved in crossing water. Nonetheless, the overriding consideration should be avoidance of such hazards wherever possible. The key to a successful outcome lies in effective contingency planning for changing conditions, including alternative routes or waiting until water levels recede.

SECTION THREE - EXPEDITIONS AND CAMPING

General Information

3.1 Expeditions build on the basic skills of adventure activities to put participants in beautiful and often remote locations. Regardless of the mode of travel, expeditions provide a great opportunity to develop confidence and resilience in young people. Expeditions require the ability to live as comfortably as possible in remote areas and under any weather conditions, with the minimum of equipment that will ensure adequate food and shelter.

3.2 Expeditioning can be carried out using any mode of travel and covers a range of activities, from an overnight camp in an official campsite to extended expeditions using lightweight equipment. In general, efficient camping is safe camping. Many aspects of camp craft can be practised before attempting an expedition to build confidence in the skills required.

3.3 **Leaders' Qualifications and Experience** Leaders introducing young people to remote and potentially hazardous environments should have been suitably trained and have the necessary skills and experience to operate safely. For the journeying elements of an expedition Leaders must stay within the limits of their qualifications and experience, which are covered in the section for each mode of transport. The following paragraphs use walking as an example of appropriate qualifications.

3.4 **Camping** Camping at organised camp sites requires no specific training, however leaders are to ensure young people are appropriately supervised. Participants must be trained or directly supervised when erecting or dismantling tents and when cooking.

3.5 **Wild Camping** Leaders with Low Level or Low Hills qualifications can supervise camping at sites where there are no facilities provided the site meets the following criteria. Camp sites must be within 15 minutes easy walking of a road or access point. This will enable access to additional equipment or supervising staff if required. Participants should be suitably trained in camp craft skills. The location and conduct of the camp must conform to the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

3.6 **Remote Camping and Expeditions** Holders of Lowhills, Lowland or Moorland Leader qualifications may supervise remote wild camping only if they have completed additional training. This training comprises a Remote Supervision module for the Lowhills qualification or the Expedition Skills module for NGB Awards. Holders of the Mountain Leader Summer qualification can supervise remote expeditions and wild camping activities in accordance with the remit of the qualification. Participants in expeditions using remote camp sites must be suitably trained for the terrain and the route.

Guidance for Leaders

3.7 **Planning** Careful planning and preparation will contribute greatly to safety and quality of the experience for young people. The following points must be considered when planning an expedition:

a. Local information and knowledge of the area. Exploratory visits are recommended to familiarise leaders with the route and identify potential hazards.

b. Routes must be safe and suitable for the abilities of the group. Plans must include alternative bad weather and escape routes.

c. Selecting suitable, safe campsites.

d. Notifying land owners/managers of the intended route and camp sites. Land owners may suggest alternatives that avoid stalking or other estate activity.

e. Arrangements for food, fuel and equipment.

f. Arrangements for transport, including use of a support vehicle if recommended by the risk assessment.

g. The time of year, prevailing weather conditions and altitude. An up to date 4 day forecast should be obtained before departing.

3.8 **Safety Procedures** Wild country offers the opportunity for challenge and adventure and this often implies a level of perceived risk. This risk can be effectively managed through proper training and by observing safety procedures. For all expeditions the Visit Leader must ensure that:

a. Supervising staff have the necessary qualifications and competence to lead the expedition.

b. The supervisor knows the individuals in the group well enough to forecast their reactions to the physical and mental demands likely to be met.

c. Party members understand the nature, purpose and aims of the expedition, and the actions to be taken in the event of an emergency.

c. An equipment check should be made before the party leave their start point. If any member(s) of the party arrive inadequately clothed or equipped, plans must be re-evaluated to take this into account.

d. Supervising staff have the appropriate first aid qualifications and participants have received appropriate first aid training if required.

e. The effects of the weather on the health and comfort of members of the party should be considered, e.g. extremes of heat and cold, wind chill, combination of wind and rain. Changes in the weather, both forecast and unexpected, should be responded to as appropriate.

f. The Base Contact has full details of the expedition and participants.

g. Consideration should be given to the potential impact on the environment, other walkers and people who live or work in the area.

3.9 **Equipment and Clothing** All participants, staff, volunteers and young people, must be properly clothed and equipped for the expedition. Pre-prepare check lists can help inform participants and parents/guardians of the equipment required. Moray Council have prepared an example kit list which is available at Appendix 1. The following points should be considered when planning the expedition:

a. The suitability of rucksacks, sleeping bags, camping mats, tents, stoves and other items of lightweight camping gear available.

b. Ensuring equipment is serviceable and fit for purpose.

c. Choice of clothing; clothing must be suitable for the activity, terrain, weather and time of year. Participants must be able to stay warm or keep cool as required.

d. Spare clothing.

e. First aid and emergency equipment.

f. Waterproofing, packing and carrying equipment.

f. Keeping the weight carried to a minimum. As a general rule, participants should not carry more than 25% of their body weight.

g. Appropriate footwear for the venture.

3.10 **Supervision Ratios** Supervision ratios must be within the limits of the leader's qualification for the mode of travel. Specific guidance is available in the relevant section.

3.11 Supervision ratios must be informed by the site specific risk assessments made for the activity. Factors will include the nature of the group, terrain, weather conditions and experience of the supervising staff.

3.12 The size of any group and the strategies used must always allow the leader to remain in control and in effective contact with all members of the group. Where organisational constraints require large parties to operate in the same area they should be broken into manageable groups that can operate independently.

3.14 At least 2 members of staff should accompany any excursion. This will provide cover to respond to any safety or child protection incident. Exceptions to this guidance must be informed by a comprehensive risk assessment and will be informed by the training and experience of the leader and the experience of the party.

3.15 **Preparing Participants** Expeditioning requires a good level of competence to allow participants to have a rewarding experience. All participants must have a degree of training proportional to the level of expedition they are taking part in. This includes being competent in the mode of travel and camp craft skills. As young people progress from expeditions at low level to high hills and remote wild country the experience and training required will increase. The aim should be to get young people to a level where they are able to journey safely and with due respect for the environment under remote supervision.

3.16 Participants at all levels should be trained in the following:

a. Selecting a camp site and pitching and striking tents.

b. Daily routine for the camp site.

c. Personal hygiene, toilet arrangements and leaving no trace.

d. Food preparation and hygiene.

e. Safe use of stoves.

f. Care for the environment and the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

g Moving together as a team.

h. Dealing with changing weather conditions; selecting correct clothing, recognising the symptoms of cold or heat related injuries.

i. Actions in the event of emergency; dealing with simple problems and summoning help when required.

3.17 **Supervision** Supervisors are responsible for the safety of the team they are supervising or leading. Visit Leaders and supervisors must work together to ensure that the level of supervision is appropriate to the needs of participants. Leaders should be aware that the level of supervision a team needs will vary considerably, often through a single day. Some teams will require additional training or supervision. Notwithstanding the participants' level of experience or training, tasks will require closer supervision when young people are fatigued, in poor weather conditions or in the dark. Therefore supervising staff need to stay flexible be prepared to adapt their supervision plan to changing circumstances.

SECTION FOUR - MOUNTAINEERING

General Information

4.1 Mountaineering is, in many ways, a natural step from Hillwalking. Mountains mean freedom, adventure, beauty and solitude. Scottish mountain provide a wonderful opportunity to experience these qualities. However, mountains also imply remoteness, altitude and risk. Therefore excursions involving mountaineering require careful planning and consideration. The guidance in Section 2 (Walking and Hillwalking) applies to mountaineering excursions. This section adds additional guidance and advice specific to high mountains.

4.2 **Definitions** Many mountains can be climbed without the use of specialist equipment or techniques. These can be considered as High Hills for the purposes of excursion planning. Some of these include approaches that, while they include no technical aspect, have hazards such as steep cliffs on one side or both. The risks are easily managed in benign weather but become significantly harder in mist or rain. These mountains will require additional risk assessment and mitigation.

4.3 Other mountains include features that require the use of hands as well as feet, and may require climbing equipment, to progress safely. These are classified as scrambles and are graded according to nature of difficulties faced. Note: Establishments must consult Moray Council's Technical Expert before including any scramble in an excursion run under the auspices of Moray Council's AALA license.

4.4 Winter Mountaineering should not be included in any excursion run under the auspices of Moray Council's AALA license. Winter can be defined as the time when snow and ice prevail or are forecast. Summer conditions are defined as anything that is not winter. Neither term can be defined by a portion of the year.

4.5 The NGB for mountaineering is Mountain Training. The minimum qualification for supervisors is Mountain Leader (Summer). More information may be found at www.mountain-training.org.

Guidance for Leaders

4.6 As detailed in Section 2, qualified Mountain Leaders can lead excursions on terrain described in para 4.2. The risk assessment must detail any specific hazards on the planned route. Particular consideration must be given to the abilities of all participants and forecast weather conditions. Supervisors must also consider the level of supervision they give the team. On many mountains young people will need Close or Direct supervision. Supervisors should not lead a group into high mountains if they feel that they or the team are not ready for the challenge.

4.7 Mountain Leaders may lead a group on simple scrambles, provided no technical equipment is needed to protect the route and they have the experience and currency to do so. All participants must be closely supervised on these routes. See note in para 4.3.

4.8 The teaching and instruction of technical mountaineering activities is only within the remit of qualified Mountain Instructors and Mountain Guides. Qualified staff wishing to lead young people in mountaineering activities must discuss their plans with Moray Council's Technical Expert.

4.9 Establishments wishing to carry out a technical grade mountaineering excursion may choose to do so through an Approved Activity Provider, as long as the provider has the capability to deliver the activity. This must include management structure, safety arrangements, qualified staff and insurance.

SECTION FIVE: ROCK CLIMBING

General Information

5.1 Rock climbing is an activity in which participants climb up, down or across natural rock formations or artificial rock walls. It is a physically and mentally demanding sport, one that often tests a climber's strength, endurance, agility, balance and mental control.

5.2 Safe climbing depends on proper technique and use of specialist equipment. Most climbing activities for young people, whether indoors or outdoors, involve top roping; where the climber is securely attached to a rope which passes up, through an anchor system at the top of the climb, and back down to a belayer at the foot of the climb. This is an effective way of mitigating and managing the risks involved in climbing; participants' safety can be managed while they retain a feeling of exposure and/or exhilaration. Therefore, with good supervision climbing is an excellent activity for learning discipline, trust, judgment, confidence and teamwork.

5.3 **Definitions** Rock climbing activities with groups normally consist of single pitch climbs, abseiling or bouldering. Multi-pitch climbing and scrambling as part of a mountain route are not covered by this guidance and Establishments must consult Moray Council's Technical Expert before including these activities in an excursion run under the auspices of Moray Council's AALA license.

5.4 The NGB for Rock Climbing is Mountain Training. More information on the range of qualifying awards may be found at www.mountain-training.org.

Guidance for Leaders

5.5 The guidance that follows focuses on single pitch climbing, and is aimed to assist Visit Leaders and activity supervisors during the planning phase of an excursion.

5.6 **Planning** Careful planning and preparation are essential to safe and enjoyable outcomes for climbing activities. Refer to the generic risk assessment for this activity for the main hazards and risks. In addition the following information specific to the location must be considered:

a. The abilities and needs of all individuals within the group.

b. Approach route to the crag or cliff.

c. Ease of management of a group at the location. Is there a safe area where participants not actively involved in climbing can wait?

d. Details of the location; the height of the crag, steepness of ground at the top and bottom of the crag, ease of decent from top of climb, slippery rocks, etc.

e. Suitability of the climbing routes and grades for the needs of participants.

f. Forecast weather conditions and tides.

g. Environmental considerations; erosion at the foot of the climb, nesting restrictions, conservation guidelines.

h. Poor weather alternatives.

5.7 **Safety Procedures** The overall safety of a climbing session is dependent on good instruction and safe practice. Running a session out of doors will place an extra workload on the Instructor and supervisors to ensure all members of the group are adequately supervised. Additional supervising staff may be required to supervise members of the group not actively involved in climbing.

5.8 The minimum level of qualification for leading a rock climbing session is Rock Climbing Instructor (RCI). The Instructor must ensure the planned activity is within the scope of his qualification and experience. The Instructor may be assisted by qualified Supervisors holding a Single Pitch Award to allow more participants to take part in the activity. The following guidance will assist in managing the group and the activity:

a. Knowledge of the group is important; Instructors and Supervisors should be aware of any medical, physical or behavioural issues. Knowledge of previous experience is also useful.

b. The group must be comprehensively briefed on the activity, equipment, and safety, potential hazards, codes of behaviour, waiting areas and out of bounds areas.

c. The Instructor has the overall responsibility for safety equipment. All participants must be aware of how to wear and use the equipment provided.

d. Fastening to rope; When climbing, participants should be tied in to ropes using appropriate knots. Clipping on to a bight of rope using a locking karabiner is only acceptable when attaching a participant to a safety line during abseils. Attachment points must be checked by the Instructor or a qualified Supervisor before a participants starts to climb, until the Instructor is assured that the participant is competent to carry out this task.

e. Good communication is essential; participants must know and use basic climbing calls so that everybody knows what is happening.

f. General security; group members waiting on ledges or near edges should be clipped to security lines. Traverse lines should be used where appropriate.

g. Rescue techniques; the Instructor should endeavour to prevent problems before they arise or resolve them using the simplest means possible.

h. Bouldering must only take place when clear guidelines are given and control measures put in place to avoid participants climbing too high. Normal height limits should not exceed 1 metre above the base. Crash mats must be used and bouldering above uneven surfaces must be avoided.

i. When teaching basic belay techniques Instructors must ensure the following:

- The belayer is no more than two metres from the wall.
- There is no slack rope in the system.
- Lowers are slow and controlled.
- Unless rope is being taken in, the belay plate is in a locked position.
- Ropes must be 'tailed' by a second person behind a novice belayer until the Instructor is assured of the belayer's competence.
- Measures are put in place to deal with differences in weight between climbers and belayers.

j. Consideration should also be given to the potential impact on the environment and walkers or other people who live or work in the area.

5.9 Tyrolean traverses or zip lines are outwith the remit of the RCI qualification. They must only be managed by someone with appropriate training, such as a Mountain and Climbing Instructor (MCI).

5.10 **Equipment** Safety is primarily a function of thought and attitude but careful selection and use of equipment is essential to safety when climbing. All technical equipment must be inspected regularly in accordance with Part 1 Section 5 of this document. In addition, the Instructor must ensure that all technical equipment, including ropes, is in good condition and appropriate for the planned session prior to use. If there is any doubt about the condition of an item of equipment it must be removed from use.

5.11 Instructors should note the following:

a. Properly sized equipment must be provided for all members of the group.

b. When working with very small, large or disabled persons, full body harnesses should be used.

c. Equipment must be correctly adjusted and fitted to each participant. Swapping or sharing of items of personal equipment should be avoided.

d. If for any reason clothes are removed, put on or adjusted after the original fitting, belts, harnesses and helmets must be re-checked.

e. Helmets must be worn when participating in the activity or when close to the crag. Once a session has started participants should not remove their helmets without the approval of the Instructor.

f. Locking karabiners must be used for all body attachments and main belay points.

g. Knots in belts, excessively large leg loops and over adjusted helmets are not acceptable.

5.12 A first aid kit, survival bag and group shelter should be available at the site of the activity.

5.13 **Clothing** The group must be appropriately clothed for the prevailing conditions. In wet and windy conditions waterproofs and warm clothing are essential. Instructors are to ensure:

a. Clothes should be well fitted and non-restrictive.

b. Participants should have sufficient spare clothing to allow layering.

c. Participants must have protective wind and waterproof clothing, hat and gloves.

d. Full body cover is necessary in strong sunlight.

e. Long hair should be tied back to prevent it getting trapped in climbing equipment.

f. Jewellery should be removed.

5.14 **Supervision Ratios** The maximum permissible supervision ratio for Rock Climbing activities is 1:6. Actual supervision ratios must be informed by the site specific risk assessment for the activity. Factors will include the nature of the activity and the group, terrain, weather conditions and experience of the supervising staff.

5.15 The size of any group and the strategies used must always allow the leader to remain in control of all members of the group. Where organisational constraints require large parties to operate in the same area they should be broken into manageable groups that can operate independently.

5.16 At least 2 members of staff should accompany any excursion. This will provide cover to respond to any safety or child protection incident.

5.17 **Preparing Participants** Basic prior instruction and training in the use and care of personal protective equipment (harnesses and helmets) and key items of climbing equipment (for example karabiners and belay devices) must take place before participants begin climbing. The Instructor is responsible for ensuring participants are able use the equipment; it should never be assumed that participants understand what has been taught until it has been tested in a supervised situation.

5.18 For physical and psychological reasons introductory routes should be well within the ability of individual participants. Challenges should be introduced progressively to match growing confidence. Any training involving holding the weight of a participant on a rope must be tested and practised in a controlled situation.

5.19 Basic codes of conduct should be established before the session begins. This includes the participants' personal responsibility for behaviour in a hazardous place and etiquette to other crag users. Participants should also have an awareness of conservation issues e.g. over use, litter, flora and fauna, nesting birds, noise disturbance and graffiti.

SECTION SIX: CLIMBING WALLS

General Information

6.1 Climbing Walls offer the same benefits as Rock Climbing but within a more easily controlled environment. The controlled environment enables a range of opportunities for creative group work and technical training through the safe and imaginative use of a climbing wall.

6.2 Safe climbing depends on proper technique and use of specialist equipment. Most climbing activities for young people involve top roping; where the climber is securely attached to a rope which passes up, through an anchor system at the top of the climb, and back down to a belayer at the foot of the climb. This is an effective way of mitigating and managing the risks involved in climbing; participants' safety can be managed while they retain a feeling of exposure and/or exhilaration. Therefore, with good supervision climbing is an excellent activity for learning discipline, trust, judgment, confidence and teamwork.

6.3 **Definitions** Wall climbing activities take place on purpose built structures. Climbing Walls may be indoor or outdoor facilities. Groups can take part in single pitch climbing, abseiling or bouldering.

6.4 Climbing Walls are a good venue for introducing lead climbing; where the climber is responsible for placing their own protection. However, this must only be considered if appropriately qualified Supervisors/Instructors are available.

6.5 The NGB for Climbing Walls is Mountain Training. More information on the range of qualifying awards may be found at www.mountain-training.org.

Guidance for Leaders

6.6 The guidance is designed to assist Visit Leaders and activity supervisors during the planning phase of an excursion.

6.7 **Planning** Careful planning and preparation are essential to safe and enjoyable outcomes for climbing activities. Refer to the generic risk assessment for this activity for the main hazards and risks. The following additional factors must be considered:

a. The abilities and needs of all individuals within the group.

b. Familiarisation with the wall.

c. The area in the vicinity of the wall must be clear of obstructions such as equipment and apparatus. Where applicable, nets should be in place to protect wall users from activities carried out by other hall/area users.

d. Bookings by other hall/area users should not conflict with the aims of the wall climbing session.

6.8 **Safety Procedures** The overall safety of a climbing session is dependent on good instruction and safe practice. Additional supervising staff may be required to supervise members of the group not actively involved in climbing.

6.9 The minimum level of qualification for leading a rock climbing session is Climbing Wall Instructor (CWI). Qualified Wall Climbing Assistants (CWA) may be used to support the CWI and allow more participation. Instructors must hold a Climbing Wall Development Instructor Qualification as a minimum standard to teach lead climbing. Instructors must ensure the planned activity is within the scope of their qualifications and experience. The following guidance will assist in managing the group and the activity:

a. Knowledge of the group is important; Instructors should be aware of any medical, physical or behavioural issues. Knowledge of previous experience is also useful.

b. The group must be comprehensively briefed on the activity, equipment, and safety, potential hazards, codes of behaviour, waiting areas and out of bounds areas.

c. The Instructor has the overall responsibility for safety equipment. All participants must be aware of how to wear and use the equipment provided.

d. Fastening to rope; When climbing, participants should be tied in to ropes using appropriate knots. Clipping on to a bight of rope using a locking karabiner is only acceptable when attaching a participant to a safety line during abseils. Attachment points must be checked by the Instructor or a qualified Supervisor before a participants starts to climb until the Instructor is assured that the participant is competent.

e. Good communication is essential; participants must know and use basic climbing calls so that everybody knows what is happening.

f. Rescue techniques; the Instructor should endeavour to prevent problems before they arise or resolve them using the simplest means possible.

h. Bouldering must only take place when clear guidelines are given and control measures put in place to avoid participants climbing too high. Normal height limits should not exceed 1 metre above the base. Crash mats must be used and bouldering above uneven surfaces must be avoided.

i. When teaching basic belay techniques Instructors must ensure the following:

- The belayer is no more than two metres from the wall.
- There is no slack rope in the system.
- Lowers are slow and controlled.
- Unless rope is being taken in, the belay plate is in a locked position.
- Ropes must be 'tailed' by a second person behind a novice belayer until the Instructor is assured of the belayer's competence.
- Measures are put in place to deal with differences in weight between climbers and belayers.

6.10 **Equipment** Safety is primarily a function of thought and attitude but careful selection and use of equipment is essential to safety when climbing. All technical equipment must be inspected regularly in accordance with Part 1 Section 5 of this document. In addition, the Instructor must ensure that all technical equipment, including ropes, is in good condition and appropriate for the planned session prior to use. If there is any doubt about the condition of an item of equipment it must be removed from use.

6.11 Instructors should note the following:

a. Properly sized equipment must be provided for all members of the group.

b. When working with very small, large or disabled persons, full body harnesses should be used.

c. Equipment must be correctly adjusted and fitted to each participant. Swapping or sharing of items of personal equipment should be avoided.

d. If for any reason clothes are removed, put on or adjusted after the original fitting, belts, harnesses and helmets must be re-checked.

e. Helmets must be worn when participating in the activity or when close to the crag. Once a session has started participants should not remove their helmets without the approval of the Instructor.

f. Locking karabiners must be used for all body attachments and main belay points.

g. Knots in belts, excessively large leg loops and over adjusted helmets are not acceptable.

6.12 **Clothing** The group must be appropriately clothed for the activity. Instructors are to ensure:

a. Clothes should be well fitted and non-restrictive.

b. Long hair should be tied back to avoid it getting trapped in climbing equipment.

c. Jewellery should be removed.

6.13 **Supervision Ratios** The maximum permissible supervision ratio for Wall Climbing activities is 1:6. When introducing participants to lead climbing supervision ratios must be reduced to 1:2. Actual supervision ratios must be informed by the site specific risk assessment for the activity. Factors will include the activity and the nature of the group and experience of the supervising staff. Consideration should also be given to the potential impact on other users of the wall.

6.14 The size of any group and the strategies used must always allow the leader to remain in control of all members of the group.

6.15 At least 2 members of staff should accompany any excursion. This will provide cover to respond to any safety or child protection incident.

6.16. **Preparing Participants** Basic prior instruction and training in the use and care of personal protective equipment (harnesses and helmets) and key items of climbing equipment (for example karabiners and belay devices) must take place before participants begin climbing. The Instructor is responsible for ensuring participants are able use the equipment; it should never be assumed that participants understand what has been taught until it has been tested in a supervised situation.

6.17 For physical and psychological reasons introductory routes should be well within the ability of individual participants. Challenges should be introduced progressively to match growing confidence. Any training involving holding the weight of a participant on a rope must be tested and practised in a controlled situation.

6.18 Basic codes of conduct should be established before the session begins. This includes the participants' personal responsibility for behaviour in a hazardous place and etiquette to other wall users.

SECTION SEVEN: ABSEILING

General Information

7.1 Abseiling is an effective means of descending a crag or climbing wall after completing a climbing activity. It is also a useful standalone activity for developing team work, trust and confidence.

7.2 Safe abseiling depends on proper technique and use of specialist equipment. Abseiling, whether indoors or outdoors, involves a controlled descent of a rope which is securely anchored at the top of a crag or climbing wall. Participants can learn about managing risk by being in control of their own descent.

7.3 **Definitions** Abseiling activities with groups normally consist of single pitch descents. Multi-pitch abseiling is not covered by this guidance and Establishments must consult Moray Council's Technical Expert before including these activities in an excursion run under the auspices of Moray Council's AALA license.

7.4 The NGB for Abseiling is Mountain Training. More information on the range of qualifying awards may be found at www.mountain-training.org.

Guidance for Leaders

7.5 The guidance that follows focuses on single pitch abseiling. This guidance covers natural outdoor crags, which by their nature require more careful planning, setting up and supervision. However the guidance is also applicable to abseiling on man made indoor or outdoor climbing walls. It is aimed to assist Visit Leaders and activity supervisors during the planning phase of an excursion.

7.6 **Planning** Careful planning and preparation are essential to safe and enjoyable outcomes for abseiling activities. Refer to the generic risk assessment for this activity for the main hazards and risks. In addition the following information specific to the location must be considered:

a. The abilities and needs of all individuals within the group.

b. Approach routes to the crag or cliff.

c. Ease of management of a group at the location. There needs to be safe areas at the top and at the bottom of the crag or cliff where participants not actively involved in abseiling can wait.

d. Details of the location; the height of the crag, steepness of ground at the top and bottom of the crag, access to the top and bottom of the route, slippery rocks, etc.

e. Suitability of the route for the needs of participants.

f. Forecast weather conditions and tides.

g. Environmental considerations; erosion at the top and bottom of the abseil, nesting restrictions, conservation guidelines.

h. Poor weather alternatives.

7.7 **Safety Procedures** The overall safety of an abseiling session is dependent on good instruction and safe practice. Running a session out of doors will place an extra workload on supervisors to ensure all members of the group are adequately supervised. Additional supervising staff may be required to supervise members of the group not actively involved in abseiling.

7.8 The minimum level of qualification for leading an abseiling session is Rock Climbing Instructor (RCI). The Instructor must ensure the planned activity is within the scope of his qualification and experience. The Instructor may be assisted by qualified Supervisors holding a Single Pitch Award to allow more participants to take part in the activity. For climbing walls the minimum qualification for the lead Instructor is Climbing Wall Instructor (CWI). Qualified Wall Climbing Assistants (CWA) may be used to support the CWI and allow more participation. The following guidance will assist in managing the group and the activity:

a. Knowledge of the group is important; Instructors should be aware of any medical, physical or behavioural issues. Knowledge of previous experience is also useful.

b. The group must be comprehensively briefed on the activity, equipment, and safety, potential hazards, codes of behaviour, waiting areas and out of bounds areas.

c. The Instructor has the overall responsibility for safety equipment. All participants must be aware of how to wear and use the equipment provided.

d. Fastening to rope; When climbing, participants should be tied in to ropes using appropriate knots. Clipping on to a bight of rope using a locking karabiner is only acceptable when attaching a participant to a safety line during abseils. Attachment points must be checked by the Instructor or a qualified Supervisor before a participants starts to abseil, until the Instructor is assured that the participant is competent to tie in.

e. Safety lines must be used as a back up when introducing participants to abseiling. Instructors must assure themselves that participants are competent before allowing them to abseil without a safety line.

f. Ropes must be of sufficient length to reach the base of the crag or cliff. Ropes must be knotted to prevent abseilers descending too far. Rope protectors must be used where moving ropes pass over edges.

g. General security; group members waiting on ledges or near edges should be clipped to security lines. Traverse lines should be used where appropriate.

h. Good communication is essential; participants must know and use basic climbing calls so that everybody knows what is happening.

i. Rescue techniques; the Instructor should endeavour to prevent problems before they arise or resolve them using the simplest means possible.

j. When teaching basic belay techniques Instructors must ensure the following:

- The belayer is no more than two metres from the wall.
- There is no slack rope in the system.
- Lowers are slow and controlled.
- Unless rope is being taken in, the belay plate is in a locked position.
- Ropes must be ‘tailed’ by a second person behind a novice belayer until the Instructor is assured of the belayer’s competence.
- Measures are put in place to deal with differences in weight between climbers and belayers.

k. Consideration should also be given to the potential impact on the environment and walkers or other people who live or work in the area.

7.10 **Equipment** Safety is primarily a function of thought and attitude but careful selection and use of equipment is essential to safety when climbing. All technical equipment must be inspected regularly in accordance with Part 1 Section 5 of this document. In addition, the Instructor must ensure that all technical equipment, including ropes, is in good condition and appropriate for the planned session prior to use. If there is any doubt about the condition of an item of equipment it must be removed from use.

7.11 Instructors should note the following:

a. Properly sized equipment must be provided for all members of the group.

b. When working with very small, large or disabled persons, full body harnesses should be used.

c. Equipment must be correctly adjusted and fitted to each participant. Swapping or sharing of items of personal equipment should be avoided.

d. If for any reason clothes are removed, put on or adjusted after the original fitting, belts, harnesses and helmets must be re-checked.

e. Helmets must be worn when participating in the activity or when close to the crag. Once a session has started participants should not remove their helmets without the approval of the Instructor.

f. Locking karabiners must be used for all body attachments and main belay points.

g. Knots in belts, excessively large leg loops and over adjusted helmets are not acceptable.

7.12 A first aid kit, survival bag and group shelter should be available at the site of the activity.

7.13 **Clothing** The group must be appropriately clothed for the prevailing conditions. In wet and windy conditions waterproofs and warm clothing are essential. Instructors are to ensure:

a. Clothes should be well fitted and non-restrictive.

b. Participants should have sufficient spare clothing to allow layering.

c. Participants must have protective wind and waterproof clothing, hat and gloves.

d. Full body cover is necessary in strong sunlight.

e. Long hair should be tied back to prevent it getting trapped in climbing equipment.

f. Jewellery should be removed.

7.14 **Supervision Ratios** The maximum permissible supervision ratio for Abseiling activities is 1:6. Actual supervision ratios must be informed by the site specific risk assessment for the activity. Factors will include the activity and the nature of the group, terrain, weather conditions and experience of the supervising staff.

7.15 The size of any group and the strategies used must always allow the Instructor to remain in control of all members of the group. Where organisational constraints require large parties to operate in the same area they should be broken into manageable groups that can operate independently.

7.16 At least 2 members of staff should accompany any excursion. This will provide cover to respond to any safety or child protection incident.

7.17 **Preparing Participants** Basic prior instruction and training in the use and care of personal protective equipment (harnesses and helmets) and key items of climbing equipment (for example karabiners and belay devices) must take place before participants begin abseiling. The Instructor is responsible for ensuring participants are able use the equipment; it should never be assumed that participants understand what has been taught until it has been tested in a supervised situation.

7.18 For physical and psychological reasons the challenges of abseiling should be introduced progressively and matched to the abilities and growing confidence of individuals. Any activity involving holding the weight of a participant on a rope must be tested and practised in a controlled situation.

7.19 Basic codes of conduct should be established before the session begins. This includes the participants' personal responsibility for behaviour in a hazardous place and etiquette to other crag users. Participants should also have an awareness of conservation issues e.g. over use, litter, flora and fauna, nesting birds, noise disturbance and graffiti.

SECTION EIGHT: CYCLING

General Information

8.1 Cycling is an easily accessed activity with many educational benefits, including physical fitness, building confidence and developing a sense of independence. Young people naturally learn to ride through progression, from balance bikes to riding without stabilisers through to exploring the area around them.

8.2 This natural progression makes cycling a relatively safe activity. However, from a leadership/supervision perspective, because of the speeds that can be reached it is also an activity where things can go wrong very quickly. Therefore excursions and activities involving cycling must be planned with the same diligence as any other adventure activity.

8.3 **Definitions** Cycling covers a broad range of activities including Bikeability training, Cycle Touring and Mountain Biking. The guidance in this section is aimed at Visit Leaders planning activities using pedal cycles.

8.4 **Bikeability** Bikeability is a Department of Transport sponsored scheme designed to get young people involved in cycling and teach them to ride safely. Instructors should have completed the Bikeability Instructor qualification. Bikeability is normally run within or close to school boundaries. Sessions should be raised on EVOLVE, but do not need to be flagged as Adventurous Activity.

8.5 **Cycle Touring** Cycle touring, using conventional road cycles or mountain bikes on extended trips, is a popular activity. Scotland has an extensive network of minor roads, lanes and tracks that can be explored using simple bike skills.

8.6 **Mountain Biking** Mountain Biking is a multi-disciplined activity. It includes cross country or trail cycling, enduro and downhill, offering varying degrees of technical challenge. Mountain Biking carried out under the auspices of Moray Council's AALA License should be limited to cross country or trail riding, where mountain bikes are used as an alternative means to explore countryside and pre-prepared trails. There are a number of high quality venues in North East Scotland and the Cairngorms National Park.

8.7 The NGB for cycling is British Cycling, who run leadership awards for both road cycling and mountain biking. More information on the range of qualifying awards can be found at britishcycling.org.uk.

Guidance for Leaders

8.8 This guidance is for Visit Leaders and supervisors planning any cycling excursion.

8.9 **Planning** Careful planning and preparation are essential to safe and enjoyable outcomes for climbing activities. Refer to the generic risk assessment for this activity for the main hazards and risks. The following additional factors must be considered:

a. The abilities and needs of all individuals within the group. This includes cycling experience and fitness levels.

b. Route choice and the nature of roads and trails should be matched to the capabilities of participants. For Mountain Biking this includes terrain, technical or challenging sections and remoteness.

c. The supervisor's experience and knowledge of the route.

d. Forecast weather conditions, including wind direction and speed, the time of year and daylight hours available.

e. Mechanical failures or accidental damage to cycles.

f. Organising a cycling excursion that starts or finishes at a location any distance away from a school/establishment (such as a local trail centre) presents a logistics challenge. Participants, bikes, helmets and all other equipment will need to be transported to the start/finish. Often a trailer will be required to transport the amount of equipment required.

g. Environmental impact.

8.10 **Safety Procedures** Cycling can be an exhilarating experience and it is easy for young people to become over-confident in their ability. The speeds that can quickly be reached have the potential for a simple slip to end in injury. The Supervisor is responsible for the safety of the group and must ensure that all participants ride in a controlled manner.

8.11 Supervisors must hold one of the following qualifications to lead cycling activities under auspices of Moray Council's AALA License:

a. Level 1 Ride Leader can operate public highways and rights of way accessible by bike. The route must have a tarmac or other firm surface and should be rideable two abreast. The route must be within 10 minutes' walk from a road vehicle access point (should emergency services be required).

b. Level 2 Ride Leaders can operate in terrain that is the same as a Level 1 Leader with the following additions; the route may require specific skills and can include longer and steeper hills (up to 2 mile climbs and a gradient of 1:8).

c. Level 1 Mountain Bike Leaders can only lead on pre-determined routes with terrain that can be ridden seated and only require basic techniques. The route must be within 30 minutes walk from ambulance access. This award is primarily aimed at leaders operating from outdoor centres. Establishments wishing to use this award must have their routes approved by Moray Council's Technical Expert.

d. Level 2 Mountain Bike Leaders can operate in terrain that is rideable at walking speed and descents are rollable so that wheels are not required to

leave the ground. The route should be rideable by the whole group for 90% of its distance. The route must be within 30 minutes walk from ambulance access.

e. Level 3 Mountain Bike Leaders can operate in terrain that is the same as a Level 2 Leader with the following additions; obstacles may require more than walking speed to be negotiated and may require the wheels to leave the ground. The route may be more than may be more than 30 mins walk from ambulance access.

f. Both Level 2 and Level 3 Leaders can operate within daylight hours and in summer conditions (see Section 2 (Walking and Hillwalking) for a definition of summer conditions.

g. British Cycling qualifications do not include overnight camping, therefore any excursion with a planned overnight stop must conform to the guidance in Section 3 (Expeditions and Camping).

8.12 The following guidance will assist in managing the group and the activity:

a. Prior to the activity taking place, the Visit Leader and/or Supervisor must review the plans and reassure themselves that the plans are achievable and appropriate at that time, taking into consideration the experience and ability of the group, necessary equipment, weather and trail conditions and daylight hours available.

b. Helmets must be worn when participating in the activity. Helmets must be suitable for the activity.

c. Bikes must be suitable for the route and terrain. The Supervisor is to ensure all bikes are subject to pre-use checks before the activity starts. Pre-use checks of bikes and helmets are to be recorded.

d. For Cycle Touring and Mountain Biking, an equipment check must be made before the party leave their start point. If any member(s) of the party arrive inadequately clothed or equipped, plans must be re-evaluated to take this into account.

e. Party members must be briefed on the plan for the day, the route and specific hazards; such as steep descents, technical sections etc. Briefs should include maintaining control and a suitable speed during descents.

f. Supervising staff must maintain an ongoing awareness of the well-being of each individual in the party throughout the day. Particular attention should be given to the mindset and preparedness of members of the group at the start of the day.

d. Participants should have an appropriate understanding of actions to be taken in the event of an emergency.

e. The effects of the weather on the health and comfort of members of the party should be considered, e.g. extremes of heat and cold, wind chill, combination of wind and rain. Changes in the weather, both forecast and unexpected, should be responded to as appropriate.

f. On public roads, groups must observe the Highway Code. Riders should ride in single or double file depending on the width and nature of the road, and maintain a safe distance apart.

g. Consideration should be given to the potential impact on walkers or other people who live or work in the area. Avoid startling walkers and horse riders.

8.13 **Equipment and Clothing** Participants should be advised of the equipment and clothing required for the excursion. Pre-prepared kit lists are a useful tool for informing participants and parents/guardians. Moray Council have prepared an example kit list which is available at Appendix 1. The equipment and clothing used should be in good condition and suitable for the event, taking into account terrain and time of year. Supervisors are check the following before the start of the activity:

a. Size of bike: care and time should be taken to ensure that each bike is correctly adjusted to the size of the individual rider. Bikes must meet legal requirements when used on public roads.

b. Helmets must be properly fitted and adjusted.

c. Gloves and protective eyewear should be worn, particularly for any routes going off surfaced roads or in wet weather.

d. Reflective bandoliers, vests, anklets and wristbands add to the safety of cyclists using public roads. Leaders should encourage their use.

e. Panniers or rack-packs should be used for carrying spare clothing, food and drink. Small day sacks are useful for carrying immediate use items. For longer excursions, especially if overnight stops are included, trailers should be used. Young people should not carry large rucksacks when cycling.

8.14 **Equipment - Group Equipment** In additional to participants' personal equipment and emergency equipment carried by the Leader, the following items should be carried as group equipment:

a. Group first aid kit.

b. Group shelter and/or survival bag.

c. Mobile phone or alternative method of communication.

d. Emergency rations of food and drink.

e. Spare torch and batteries.

f. Paper and pencil.

8.15 **Equipment - The Leader** In addition to their own clothing and equipment, leaders and supervisors will need to carry equipment to deal with foreseeable incidents. Leaders should also consider carrying additional items to make up predictable shortcomings of any participant's own equipment. The amount of additional equipment that may be required will depend on the nature of the excursion. The following items should normally be carried:

a. Leader's first aid kit.

b. Map, compass & spares.

c. Cycle repair kit, appropriate for the cycles being used, comprising:
- Spare inner tubes.
- Pump with suitable valve adapters.
- Puncture repair kit.
- Tyre levers
- Screwdrivers, allen and torx keys.
- Adjustable spanner or range of spanners.
- Chain link extractor and replacement links.
- Chain lubricant.
- Assorted cable ties
- Spare parts; brake pads, brake and gear cables, nuts and bolts.
- Lights with bulbs and batteries.

8.16 **Supervision Ratios** The maximum permissible supervision ratio for cycling activities is 1:7. Actual supervision ratios may be lower and must be informed by the site specific risk assessments made for the activity. Factors will include the nature of the group, terrain, weather conditions and experience of the supervising staff.

8.17 The size of any group and the strategies used must always allow the leader to remain in control and in effective contact with all members of the group.

8.18 At least 2 members of staff should accompany any excursion. This will provide cover to respond to any safety or child protection incident. Exceptions to this guidance must be informed by a comprehensive risk assessment which will include the training and experience of the leader.

8.19 **Preparing Participants** All cycling activities must be planned around the known capabilities of all members of the group. Where ambitious projects are planned, a systematic approach to preparing participants must be used. Training and preparation should be proportional to the nature of the activity and the level of terrain. Leaders should consider the following topics when preparing teams:

a. Physical fitness.

b. Navigation; map reading, use of the compass, comparing terrain on the map and in the landscape, calculating distances and timings.

c. Technical abilities; balance and steering, effective braking,use of gears, coping with ascents and descents, riding whilst carrying or towing a load.

d. Bike care and maintenance; pre-ride checks, basic repairs, packing and carrying loads, road sense, hand signals.

e. First Aid.

f. Actions in the event of an incident or accident.

g. Mental preparation; so that participants can understand and deal with any predictable issues they may encounter.

8.20 **Environmental Issues** Visit Leaders, Supervisors and participants must be aware of the potential impact of bicycles on the environment and on other land users. The Scottish Outdoor Access Code gives the following advice.

8.21 Cycling on hard surfaces, such as wide paths and tracks, causes few problems. On narrow routes, cycling may cause problems for other people, such as walkers and horse riders. If this occurs, dismount and walk until the path becomes suitable again. Do not endanger walkers and horse riders; give other users advance warning of your presence and give way to them on a narrow path. Take care not to alarm farm animals, horses and wildlife. If you are cycling off-path avoid going onto wet, boggy or soft ground.

8.22 In hills or moorland, areas covered with thin and fragile vegetation must be avoided.

SECTION NINE: PADDLESPORTS - KAYAKING, CANOEING AND STANDUP PADDLE BOARDING

General Information

9.1 The term paddlesport is used to describe all forms of kayaking, canoeing, rafting or standup paddle boarding (SUP). There are also a number of new and evolving small craft that enable enjoyable and exciting ventures.

9.2 The environment in which paddlesports take place is constantly changing due to tides, river levels and wind conditions. Therefore all paddlesports are classified as adventure activities and require careful planning and supervision to ensure the safety of participants.

9.3 **Definitions** Paddlesports can take place throughout the year, in a range of water conditions and using a variety of craft. The following paragraphs provide a definition of the main water designations and the most common paddlesports used in an educational setting.

9.4 **Water Designations**

a. **Sheltered Water**

- Small lochs offering a variety of landing options.
- Canals
- Enclosed bays of large lochs or coastal areas, where there is minimal possibility of being blown offshore, and within 200m of a landing point.
- Enclosed harbours, where there is minimal possibility of being blown offshore.
- Quiet flat pools of rivers at medium level or less.
- The upper reaches of some suitable, slow moving estuaries.
- Defined beaches (a short section of beach) with easy landing throughout.

b. **Moderate Water**

- Large lochs, within 500m of an easy landing place and in winds that do not exceed Force 4 (Force 2 if blowing offshore).
- Grade 2 white water for open canoes. Grade 2-3 for kayaks.
- Coastline or estuary in close proximity to the shore, with easy landing options and no fast tidal streams or races, in winds not above Force 4 (Force 2 if offshore).
- The upper reaches of some estuaries.
- Beaches that are free of significant hazards (strong rips tides or undertow).
- Small to moderate surf waves (1m maximum).

c. **Advanced Water**

- Any journey on the sea or open inland water where extended crossings may be required.
- Areas of the sea that may be affected by tidal races or overfalls.

- Sections of coastline where landings may not be possible or difficult.
- Advanced Water
- Difficult sea states and /or stronger winds (Force 4 or above).
- Launching and landing through moderate surf.
- Grade 3 white water for canoes or grade 4 for kayaks.

d. **Advanced Surf**

- Surfing reefs, points and offshore features.
- Surfing from beaches where the surf height exceeds 1 metre or there are strong winds, rips, long shore drift, rocks or other potential hazards.

9.5 **Kayaking** A kayak is powered by a sitting paddler using a double-bladed paddle. Typically a kayak will have a covered deck, with the cockpit covered by a spraydeck. Kayaks are very versatile and have been adapted for a number of disciplines including touring inland waters, white water kayaking, surf kayaking and sea kayaking.

9.6 **Canoeing** A canoe is an open decked craft powered by a kneeling paddler using a single-bladed paddle. The traditional open canoe is in common use for outdoor learning and general recreation. It is a relatively stable and versatile craft that is normally paddled by two people but can be handled solo. Paddling a canoe as a pair requires effective communication and the development of good teamwork between partners.

9.7 **Standup Paddle Boards** SUP is a relatively new and popular activity. A hybrid of board surfing and canoeing, it can be enjoyed in a variety of water conditions. SUPs provides an enjoyable introduction to paddlesports for general recreation, health and wellbeing, and can be used for expeditioning.

9.8 **Other Paddlesports** The is a wide range of other craft used for recreation and outdoor education. This includes sit-on kayaks, inflatable kayaks and inflatable rafts of varying sizes. Most of these are designed for ease of use in benign water and offer the potential to make paddlesports more accessible. In additional, there are several commercial providers who offer white water rafting as an adventure activity.

9.9 **Adaptive Paddlesports** All paddlesport disciplines are now able to adapt to the requirements of participants with additional support needs. Working with health care professionals and carers, activity providers will carry out in individual needs analysis for each participant and provide the appropriate adaption to craft and equipment in order for participants to be afforded maximum inclusion. The specialist equipment and knowledge required means that adaptive sessions will normally be run using an external provider.

9.10 The NGB for most paddlesports is British Canoeing, who run leadership awards for both canoeing and all disciplines of kayaking. More information on their range of qualifying awards can be found at britishcanoeing.org.uk. British Canoeing also offer an SUP module. Leadership qualifications for SUP are also available from British Stand Up Paddleboarding, the Academy of Surf Instructors and the Water Skills Academy. Establishments wishing to include other paddlesports in an excursion should contact Moray Council's Technical Expert for advice.

9.11 Establishments may choose to use an external provider. Moray Council maintain a list of Approved Activity Providers (AAP). AAPs will have suitably qualified leaders and coaches to manage watersport activities.

Guidance for Leaders

9.12 This guidance is for Visit Leaders and supervisors planning any paddlesport excursion.

9.13 **Planning** Careful planning and preparation are essential to safe and enjoyable outcomes for paddlesport activities. Refer to the generic risk assessment for this activity for the main hazards and risks. The following additional factors must be considered:

a. The abilities and needs of all individuals within the group.

b. The choice of activity and location must be matched to the capabilities of participants.

c. The supervisor's experience and knowledge of the location. Prior knowledge of the area, tides and route selection is important for paddlesports.

d. Forecast weather conditions, including wind direction and speed, the time of year and daylight hours available.

e. Plans need to be flexible and include contingencies to allow for last minute changes due to changing conditions and circumstances.

e. Organising a paddlesport excursion presents a logistics challenge. Participants, craft, helmets, flotation devices and all other equipment will need to be transported to the start/finish. Often a trailer will be required to transport the amount of equipment required.

f. Communication; ensure relevant bodies are notified before the start and at the end of activity (for example: Coastguard, Harbour Master, Landowners). Ensure all participants are aware of how to summon assistance if things go wrong.

g. River Levels; White water rivers are generally graded at medium levels. By their very nature, actual grades encountered may change suddenly with fluctuating river levels.

h. River Mouths & Estuaries; The mouths of rivers often look placid but may be subject to strong rip currents extending a considerable distance out to sea. Mud flats are unpredictable and may cause difficulties for groups.

9.14 **Safety Procedures** Paddlesports can be a fun activity that builds confidence and teamwork. Introducing skills in a progressive manner is very important to enable young people to get the most from the activity. The Supervisor is responsible for the safety of the group and must be able to maintain control of the whole group and react to changing conditions.

9.15 Supervisors must hold the appropriate qualification for the type craft the type of activity and the designation of water (sheltered, moderate, advanced) being used. Note: British Canoeing qualifications include separate awards for leading and coaching. Supervisors must also hold current certificates for Safety and Rescue training and First Aid. More information on qualifying awards can be found at britishcanoeing.org.uk.

9.16 Paddlesport qualifications do not include overnight camping, therefore any excursion with a planned overnight stop must conform to the guidance in Section 3 (Expeditions and Camping).

9.17 The following guidance will assist in managing the group and the activity:

a. Prior to the activity taking place, the Visit Leader must review the plans and reassure themself that the plans are achievable and appropriate at that time, taking into consideration the experience and ability of the group, necessary equipment, weather and water conditions and daylight hours available.

b. Personal Flotation Devices (PFD) must be worn when participating in any paddlesport activity.

c. When conducting paddlesports on rivers, coastal rock-hopping, surfing, or in any other situation where capsize in shallow water is likely, a safety helmet is essential. Helmets are also strongly recommended for beginner sessions involving games and simulated emergency procedures where head injury from paddles and other equipment is a possibility. The ability of any group or individuals to make sound safety judgements must be considered before the Supervisor allows activities to be conducted without head protection.

d. PFD and helmets must be fit for purpose, properly fitted and adjusted.

e. An equipment check should be made before the party leave their start point. If any member(s) of the party are inadequately clothed or equipped, plans must be re-evaluated to take this into account.

f. All party members must be briefed on the plan for the day. Briefs should include expected codes of behaviour.

g. Supervising staff must maintain an ongoing awareness of the well-being of each individual in the party throughout the day. Particular attention should be given to the mindset and preparedness of members of the group at the start of the day.

h. Participants should have an appropriate understanding of actions to be taken in the event of an emergency.

i. The effects of the weather and water conditions on the health and comfort of members of the party should be considered, e.g. extremes of heat and cold, wind chill and rain. Changes in the weather and water conditions should be responded to as appropriate.

j. Participants must observe the Scottish Access Code and obey any instructions from the supervisor.

k. Consideration should be given to the potential impact on the environment, other users of the water or people who live or work in the area.

9.18 **Equipment and Clothing** Participants should be advised of the equipment and clothing required for the excursion. Pre-prepared kit lists are a useful tool for informing participants and parents/guardians. The equipment and clothing used should be in good condition and suitable for the event, taking into account the activity and time of year.

9.19 **Equipment** Whilst safety is primarily a function of thought and attitude, the careful selection of suitable equipment will make a significant contribution to safety. Supervisors must ensure the following:

a. All craft must be of the correct type and fit for purpose for the planned activity.

b. All participants must have a properly fitted and adjusted PFD and helmet.

c. All Canoes and Kayaks must have sufficient inherent or added buoyancy to ensure that they remain afloat if waterlogged (minimum 25 Kgm) and distributed to allow the craft to float horizontally. Airbags or foam wedges will significantly enhance the buoyancy of the boat when swamped. On open water, the fitting of additional buoyancy makes deep water rescues quicker and easier to perform. On white water it significantly reduces the chances of the boat becoming pinned on an obstacle and of the paddler(s) becoming entrapped.

d. All canoes and kayaks must have end grabs at bow and stern designed so as not to trap the hand and to which a karabiner can be quickly and easily attached.

e. All rafts must be fitted with a grab line, securely fixed and extending completely around the boat. Bow and stern lines must be fitted and neatly

stowed when not in use. All lines must be of at least 8 mm in diameter and bow/stern lines should be floating rope.

f. All craft should carry spare paddles in case of breakage or loss.

g. Canoes should be fitted with a 8 - 10 m painter of 8 mm floating line at each end of the canoe. The line should be stowed to avoid entanglement in the event of a capsize.

h. Bailers should be carried in each canoe, particularly when paddling on open water.

i. Kayaks should have a full plate bulkhead or blocked foam footrest. Seats should include a backstop, particularly when paddling in white water or surf.

j. Kayaks should be fitted with spray decks for comfort and safety.

9.20 **Clothing** All group members should have the following personal clothing:

a. Wind and water-proof shell.

b. Wet Suits; highly recommended in circumstances where frequent capsizes are likely. Wet suits also afford a level of protection against bumps and grazes, which often result from swimming in rapids. Wet suits for paddle sports should not restrict movement of the upper arms and shoulders. Wet suits are not normally windproof in their own right and should be worn in conjunction with a windproof paddling top.

c. Note: Dry Suits will be beyond the budget of most groups and are only effective if suitable thermal clothing is worn under them.

d. Footwear; it is important that paddlers wear suitable footwear. Old trainers with thick woollen socks or wet suit boots with a sturdy sole are good options. For open canoe journeys involving wading and portaging, stronger footwear which provides more protection for ankle and foot may be more appropriate.

e. On extended excursions and touring on open water sun hats should included in the kit list.

9.21 **Equipment - Group Equipment** In additional to participants' personal equipment and emergency equipment carried by the Leader, the following items should be carried as group equipment:

a. Group first aid kit.

b. Group shelter and/or survival bag.

c. Mobile phone or alternative method of communication.

d. Emergency rations of food and drink.

e. Throw lines.

f. Spare torch and batteries.

g. Paper and pencil.

9.22 **Equipment - The Leader** In addition to their own clothing and equipment, leaders and coaches/supervisors will need to carry equipment to deal with foreseeable incidents. Leaders should also consider carrying additional items to make up predictable shortcomings of any participant's own equipment. The amount of additional equipment that may be required will depend on the nature of the excursion. The following items should normally be carried:

a. Leader's first aid kit.

b. Map, compass and spares.

c. Rescue kit; throw line, towing system, river knife, flares (as appropriate).

d. Mobile phone, radio or alternative means of communication.

e. Survival bag.

f. Hot drinks and group food.

9.23 **Supervision Ratios** The following supervision ratios are the maximum permissible for paddlesports. Ratios can be increased using a competent assistant (see notes below). The assistant must be endorsed by Moray Council's Technical Expert if they have no formal qualification:

a. Sheltered water; 1:8 (1:12 with a competent assistant). This may be increased to 1:10 if the Instructor is qualified for Moderate water.

b. Moderate water; 1:6 (1:10 with a competent assistant).

c. Advanced water and Advanced Surf; 1:4.

9.24 Note: for safety reasons, when using kayaks or canoes, there must be a minimum of two craft on the water at all times. Total numbers of participants in any group must not exceed 12.

9.25 Actual supervision ratios may be lower and must be informed by the site specific risk assessments made for the activity. Factors will include the nature of the group, terrain, weather conditions and experience of the supervising staff. The size of any group and the strategies used must always allow the leader to remain in control and in effective contact with all members of the group.

9.26 At least 2 members of staff should accompany any excursion. This will provide cover to respond to any safety or child protection incident. Exceptions to this guidance must be informed by a comprehensive risk assessment which will include the training and experience of the leader.

9.27 **Preparing Particiapnts** All paddlesports activities must be planned around the known capabilities of all members of the group. Where ambitious projects are planned, a systematic approach to preparing participants must be used. Training and preparation should be proportional to the nature of the activity and local conditions. Leaders should consider the following topics when preparing teams:

a. Physical fitness; participants should normally be able to swim 50 metres. If there are non-swimmers in the group, the Instructor should satisfy themselves that the participant(s) has a reasonable level of water confidence when wearing a buoyancy aid.

b. Technical abilities; all participants should undergo some basic training on simple water before taking part in longer excursions.

c. Navigation skills (if applicable).

d. First Aid.

e. Actions in the event of an incident or accident.

g. Mental preparation; so that participants can understand and deal with any predictable issues they may encounter.

9.28 **Environmental Issues** Visit Leaders, Instructors and participants must be aware of the potential impact of paddlesports on the environment and on other water users. Participants should be aware of the Scottish Access Code and particular attention should be given to:

a. Bank and land erosion at access and egress points

b. Rights and responsibilities of access.

c. Disturbance to wildlife.

d. Disturbance to other water users.

e. Parking of vehicles and trailers.

f. Discreet changing before/after activities.

9.29 **Contaminated Water** Careful consideration should be given to the dangers associated with polluted or contaminated water. Supervisors/Instructors should be aware of the dangers of blue/green algae, Weil's Disease and Lyme's Disease.

Additional Guidance for Kayaking in Swimming Pools

9.30 Pool sessions can provide an excellent opportunity to build confidence and promote inclusivity by allowed young people to develop their skills in a controlled environment. Young people can learn to paddle, improve boat handling skills, develop water confidence and overcome fears of capsize. Pools are good for practicing safety procedures and rescue drills.

9.31 **Planning** **T**he following factors should be considered when planning a pool session:

a. Session aims and objectives.

b. Communication with pool management and staff regarding local requirements.

c. Care must be taken to prevent damage to the pool and water filtration systems.

d. Facilities for cleaning kayaks. If Kayaks are not being used exclusively for pool sessions then they must be thoroughly cleaned before entering the pool area.

e. Facilities for storing equipment.

f. Ensuring all participants are adequately briefed regarding appropriate behaviour and clothing etc.

9.32 **Equipment and Clothing** Swimming pools provide a relatively safe environment. Nonetheless selecting the right equipment and clothing will add to the safety and enjoyment of a pool session. Supervisors must ensure the following:

a. Kayaks should have rounded ends to prevent injury to participants and damage to the pool. Where other types of craft are used appropriate precautions (such as padding the ends of the boat) should be taken.

b. Paddles with metal edged blades must not be used.

c. Any outside equipment e.g. paddles, buoyancy aids etc. should be cleaned before use in a pool.

d. Kayaks and equipment should regularly be checked for damage, especially any sharp edges around cockpit or footrests.

e. Consideration should be given to participants wearing appropriate body covering to prevent scratches and abrasions which are common during paddlesport activities.

f. Instructors may decide whether PFD or helmets are required for the session. Note: encouraging the use of PPE is advantageous when coaching for long-term learning and the transfer of skills to the outdoor environment where the use of PFD is necessary.

9.33 **Supervision Ratios** To supervise a pool kayaking session for participants from one Establishment, Instructors/Supervisors must hold a Paddlesport Activity Assistant Endorsement, Paddlesport Instructor or higher. Supervisors must also hold a Foundation Safety & Rescue Award or other lifesaving award which conforms to local pool requirements and a current First Aid qualification.

9.34 To supervise an open pool kayaking session, Instructors/Supervisors must hold a Kayak Coach Award or higher and a valid water safety qualification.

9.35 Maximum supervision ratios are 1:8 (1:12 with a competent assistant).

9.36 **Activity Plans** A pool session should be an enjoyable and positive experience for participants. To achieve this, Leaders should take account of the following:

a. Participants should normally be able to swim 50 metres. If there are non-swimmers in the group, the Instructor should satisfy themselves that the participant(s) has a reasonable level of water confidence when wearing a buoyancy aid. Non- swimmers must always wear a buoyancy aid.

b. Casual swimming must not be permitted while the canoe session is in progress unless an area is roped off specifically for swimming.

c. Where possible the session should be organised using a buddy system system; where one paddler is supported by another group member in the water or on the poolside. Where a buddy system is not possible one member of the group must remain on the poolside to look out for potential problems.

SECTION TEN: WORKING AT WATER MARGINS AND SWIMMING IN NATURAL WATERS

General Information

10.1 Outdoor learning activities often take place at water margins; for example, coastal walks, riverside walks and field studies that include water sampling. It is recognised that young people taking part in these activities or an adventurous activity may wish to paddle or swim in these waters. Swimming or paddling in natural waters is fun but it is important for leaders to understand the potentially serious consequences.

Guidance for Leaders

10.2 **Planning** Careful planning and preparation are essential to safe and enjoyable outcomes for swimming in natural waters. Refer to the generic risk assessment for this activity for the main hazards and risks. The following factors must be considered:

a. Swimming in natural waters must be planned for in advance to ensure that an adequate site specific risk assessment has been completed. Unless the site is a designated area for swimming and has life guards in place, the activity must be notified as adventurous activity. Parents/Guardians must be informed and give consent.

b. Natural waters can be extremely cold even in summer and participants should be aware of the dangers of sudden immersion in cold water.

c. Swimming or paddling must be closely supervised.

d. Participants must be given clear boundaries for the activity.

e. If the site is a river, attention should be given to:
- Water flow rates and the potential for a rapid fluctuations in level due to recent rainfall or releases from dams.
- Potential for floating objects being wash down stream.
- Potential for participants to be washed downstream.
- Obstacles or falls below the site.

f. If site is a beach, attention should be given to:
- Tides, including potential rip currents and undertows.
- Obstacles and rocks.

g. Restrictions placed on swimming by landowners, local authority, or water authority.

h. Potential danger from polluted water.

10.3 **Safety Procedures** Supervisors must assess the area before young people are allowed to enter the water. They must ensure that participants are aware of potential hazards and codes of conduct for the activity. This includes:

a. Checking the area to ensure there are no obstacles or obvious dangers.

b. Ensure that the entry and exit points to the water are safe.

c. Limits of the swimming area.

d. Participants must stay within the bounds of their abilities. Where there are no shallow areas for paddling only those who can swim may be allowed into the water. Any participants not engaged in the activity must stay clear of the water.

e. Jumping into clear water must only be allowed where the depth is known and the area is clear of underwater obstacles.

f. Diving head first must not be permitted.

g. A qualified lifesaver must remain on the bank keeping constant watch; if the lifesaver is required to enter the water, a responsible person must take their place to act as a second pair of eyes and alert them to any emergency situation.

10.4 **Supervision Ratios** The maximum supervision ratio is 1:6. When another responsible adult is available to assist, the maximum group size is 8.

10.5 For activities involving working near water and with no intention to enter the water beyond mid shin height, it is recommended that staff attend a water safety and awareness course such as those offered by the RLSS National Water Safety Management Programme (NWSMP). Supervisors who have not completed this training may be endorsed by Moray Council's Technical Expert. This may include visits to the establishment and/or excursions to offer support to supervisors.

10.6 All swimming activities must be supervised by a competent and experienced leader with the skills to affect a rescue. The leader must hold a current and appropriate lifesaving or water safety and rescue award. Organisations that offer appropriate awards include:

a. Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) http://www.rlss.org.uk/.

b. Surf Life Saving GB (SLSGB) http://www.slsgb.org.uk/.

c. Rescue 3 Europe. http://www.rescue3europe.com/.

d. British Canoeing's water safety and rescue training scheme may be used as appropriate qualifications. Leaders wishing to use these qualification for a swimming activity are to consult with Moray Council's Technical Expert.

10.7 **Additional Guidance for Improvised Raft Building** Improvised Raft Building must only take place in sheltered waters. The Supervisor of the activity must hold an appropriate lifesaving or paddlesport award. Rafts must be checked by the Supervisor before entering the water. Participants must wear helmets and PFD when using the raft. They must be briefed on the actions required if the raft capsizes or breaks up. The Supervisor must be able to manage any capsize, entrapment or break-up of the craft.

SECTION ELEVEN: ORIENTEERING

General Information

11.1 Orienteering can be described as a mixture of cross-country running and map reading, usually taking place in accessible forest areas or city parks and gardens. The objective is to successfully navigate round a series of checkpoints in the shortest time. Competitors carry a specially drawn map on which the checkpoints or control sites are marked, a description of each control and a 'control card'.

11.2 Orienteering at a competitive level is governed by the rules of the British Orienteering Federation. Orienteering skills can also be used at a more elementary level to teach navigation and problem solving.

11.3 The NGB for Orienteering is British Orienteering. More information on the range of qualifying awards may be found at www.britishorienteering.org.uk.

Guidance for Leaders

11.4 **Planning** Careful planning and preparation will contribute to making Orienteering a safe and enjoyable activity. Refer to the generic risk assessment for this activity. The following specific information must be considered:

a. The person in charge of the event must be approved by the Head of Establishment as competent to run an Orienteering season and should have experience of the area that is to be used.

b. Course planning and control sites should give due consideration to safety, particularly in regard to length of course, the terrain involved and the ability and fitness of participants.

c. Dangerous areas must be avoided. These areas must be clearly marked on all maps of the competition or training area. Particular hazards such as quarries, crags, deep ponds or marshes should be marked 'out of bounds' and taped off.

d. Due regard should be paid to the weather.

e. Plans must include emergency procedures specific to the activity and location.

f. A search and rescue procedure for missing or overdue participants must be in place prior to any event.

11.5 **Safety Procedures** Orienteering requires structured organisation to ensure the safety of participants. The person in charge of the event must ensure that:

a. There is a record of all individuals out on the course.

b. All participants report to the finish whether or not they have completed the course.

c. Participants are fully briefed before the event starts. This brief is to include:

- Safety information.
- Out of bounds areas, potential hazards and emergency procedures.
- Safety bearings
- Participants' behaviour.
- Course closure times
- The importance of handing in control cards at the finish.

11.6 Orienteering is one of few outdoor activities in which a young person may be entirely alone in the forest or countryside. This raises a very slight but possible risk of being assaulted. The problems associated with this need to be recognised and understood. In educational settings young people should initially compete in pairs.

11.7 **Clothing and Equipment** The following clothing and equipment are required:

a. All participants should carry a compass.

b. Individuals or pairs should carry a watch. This will enable accurate timings of legs and allow participants to keep within course closure times.

c. All participants must carry a whistle for emergency use and know how to signal an emergency.

d. Full body and leg cover should be worn at all times to protect against ticks. In winter warm and/or waterproof garments are essential. Footwear should be sturdy with good tread.

e. Equipment should not be carried on strings around the neck to avoid entanglement.

f. Leaders should ensure that a first aid kit and group shelter are available.

11.8 **Supervision Ratios** Although orienteering is a relatively low risk activity it still requires careful management and supervision because participants will often be out of direct line of sight of supervising staff. Supervision ratios must not exceed 1:12 to ensure safety and enable good learning outcomes. At least 2 members of staff should be present throughout the event. This will provide cover to respond to any safety or child protection incident.

11.9 Supervision ratios must be informed by the site specific risk assessments made for the activity. Factors will include the nature of the group, terrain, weather conditions and experience of the supervising staff. Consideration should also be given to the potential impact on the environment, other people who exercise, live or work in the area. The size of any group and safety plans must enable the group leader to remain in effective control of the entire group.

11.10 **Preparing Participants** Orienteering can be a fast moving sport requiring good navigation skills and judgement. Because participants will be moving independently or in pairs it is important the young people are introduced to the sport in a structured and progressive manner.

11.11 Locations and routes must be suitable for the age and experience of participants; novice participants should not be sent straight into a forest on their first attempt.

11.12 Participants must be conversant with the use of safety bearings and out of bounds markings before being allowed to operate under remote supervision.

11.13 **Additional Recommendations** Leaders should make themselves aware of British Orienteering's coaching scheme and safety recommendations. They should be also be encouraged to attend training courses organised by British Orienteering. The use of permanent orienteering courses, such as the ones in Quarrel Wood and Culbin Forest, is strongly recommended. More information is available through Moravian Orienteering Club. Active Schools run an active programme in schools across Moray.

SECTION TWELVE: SNOWSPORTS

General Information

12.1 NE Scotland is particularly well served for Snowsports excursions due to the ease of access to Cairngorm and Lecht Ski Centres. Aberdeenshire also provides good opportunities for Nordic Skiing. Dependent on weather conditions, snowsports can be possible from late November to late April.

12.2 Because of the range technical equipment and supervisor qualifications required and the limited season available in the UK, snowsport excursions are usually planned using an external provider. This guidance is aimed at Visit Leaders to help them plan excursions. Where excursions include a residential or overseas element Visit Leaders should also consult Moray Council's Excursion Policy Sections 10 and 11 (Residential and Overseas Excursions)

12.2 **Definitions** Snowsports include a range of disciplines:

a. Alpine or downhill skiing, using a fixed heel binding, usually takes place of pre-prepared pistes served by lifts with Ski Patrols.

b. Nordic skiing uses lightweight free heel equipment for travel on relatively low lying prepared pistes and/or forest trails.

c. Telemarking is a branch of Nordic skiing that is enjoying a revival. It uses free heel bindings for downhill skiing.

d. Snowboarding uses a single board with fixed bindings.

e. Adaptive Snowsports All snowsport disciplines are now able to adapt to the requirements of participants with additional support needs. Adaptive skiing uses a wide range of adapted skis or snowboards to make snowsports accessible to a wide range of disabilities. The specialist equipment and knowledge required means that adaptive sessions will normally be run using an external provider.

e. Off-piste skiing or snowboarding and ski mountaineering are not covered by this guidance and Establishments must consult Moray Council's Technical Expert before including these activities in an excursion run under the auspices of Moray Council's AALA license.

Guidance for Leaders

12.3 **Planning** Careful planning and preparation are essential to safe and enjoyable outcomes for any snowsports excursion. Refer to the generic risk assessment for each activity activity for the main hazards and risks. The following factors must be considered:

a. Local knowledge will make planning much more effective.

b. Programmes plans should be flexible to allow for last minute changes or cancellation due to changing wether and snow conditions or unforeseen circumstances.

c. Knowledge of the group is important; Supervisors should be aware of any medical, physical or behavioural issues. Knowledge of previous experience is also useful. Activities should be tailored to the abilities and needs of participants. The programme plan should also allow individuals to learn at their own rate.

d. Ski area and access roads reports should be consulted before setting out. Forecasts for weather, daylight hours and, where applicable, an avalanche report must be checked before the start of the activity.

12.4 **Equipment - Group Members** Participants should be advised of the equipment and clothing required for the excursion. Pre-prepared kit lists are a useful tool for informing participants and parents/guardians.

12.5 Whilst safety is primarily a function of thought and attitude, the careful selection of the most suitable equipment will make a significant contribution to safety. All equipment must be of the correct type and fit for purpose for the planned activity. Supervisors must ensure the following:

a. Skis or snow boards should be an appropriate length for the individual and the activity.

b. Bindings must be appropriate for the activity and adjusted by a suitably trained ski technician. A retaining leash must be used with snow boards.

c. Ski boots must be well fitted and appropriate to the activity and the individual’s ability.

d. Ski poles should be an appropriate length for the individual and the activity.

e. Ski helmets must be worn by all participants. Helmets must be suitable for the activity and properly sized and adjusted.

f. For nordic skiing ski brakes or safety straps must be used.

g. Where required participants should adequate spare clothing, food, drink, and waterproofs. Refer to Section 2 (Walking and Hillwalking) for further guidance.

12.6 **Equipment - the Leader** Dependent on the activity and conditions, Instructors/Supervisors should carry the following items in addition to their personal equipment:

a. Spare clothing, hat, gloves, goggles.

b. First aid kit.

c. Piste map.

d. Mobile Phone, with preloaded emergency contact numbers.

e. Sun cream.

f. Wax for skis/snow boards and repair kit.

g. Hot drink, spare food.

12.7 **Clothing** The group must be appropriately clothed for the prevailing conditions. In wet and windy conditions waterproofs and warm clothing are essential. Instructors/Supervisors are to ensure that participants are properly dressed for the activity and the prevailing conditions. Instructors/Supervisors should make sure that all participants have a windproof and waterproof shell for full body cover and a warm hat and gloves at the start of every session.

12.8 **Supervision Ratios** The maximum supervision ratio for on-piste snowsports is 1:10. This ratio should not be exceeded and in some instances it may be necessary to reduce this ratio further. More information on the range of qualifying awards may be found at http://snowsportscotland.org/courses/courses and https://www.basi.org.uk.

12.9 **Free Skiing** Free skiing enables students to practice skills in small groups without the direct supervision of an Instructor. Any arrangements for free skiing must ensure that the safety of the students and other skiers is not compromised. When planning a free skiing session, Instructor/Supervisors must consider the following:

a. The ability and experience of individuals.

b. The area to be used are clearly identified and understood by students. Free skiing must only take place within patrolled ski areas.

c. Supervisors/Instructors must contact the group at least once in every session.

d. Groups should consist of 3 to 5 students and must remain together throughout the session.

e. Students must be briefed on the following:
   - Actions to be taken if the group becomes separated.
   - Report back location and timing.
   - Actions in the event of an incident or emergency.

12.10 **Preparing Participants** Students should be introduced to snowsports with a structured and systematic approach using appropriate teaching techniques and progressions. Students must be allowed to develop skills and confidence at their own pace. Particular attention should be paid to:

a. Codes of conduct for safe skiing.

b. The terrain must be suitable for the participants skills and experience.

c. Proper use and care of equipment.

d. Proper use of ski tows.

e. Control of speed, including how to fall safely.

SECTION THIRTEEN: OTHER ADVENTUROUS ACTIVITIES

General Information

13.1 The AALA definition of Adventurous Activities can be found in Part 1 of this document. In addition, Moray Council policy is that some common activities must be notified on EVOLVE as Adventrous Activities. These include rock wall climbing, activities close to or swimming in natural waters and snowsports.

13.2 This section introduces other activities that can be categorised as Adventurous Activities and should be notified on EVOLVE. Most do not fall entirely within the scope of the activities discussed previously but they will include a technical or adventurous element.

13.3 **Definitions** The decision to notify an excursion as Adventurous Activity should be made by the Head of Establishment and the Visit Leader based on their initial risk assessment.

13.4 The following factors should be considered when deciding if an activity is notifiable:

a. Does the activity take place in remote or potentially hazardous site.

b. Does the activity require the use of specialist technical equipment, specialist instruction or trained leadership.

c. Does the activity take place at any height above ground level.

d. Does the activity take place on, near or over water.

13.5 **Example Activities** Popular sports and activities that fall into this category include:

a. Low Rope and High Ropes courses.

b. Gorge walking and Coasteering.

c. Zip wires and Tyrolean or other rope-aided traverses.

d. Power Kiting.

e. Wind Surfing and Kite Surfing.

Guidance for Leaders

13.6 Most of these activities require specialist equipment and knowledge. Therefore it is recommended that Establishments use an AAP to deliver these activities if required. Moray Council maintain a list of AAPs.

13.7 For planning purposes, Visit Leaders should consider the following:

a. The nature of the planned activity and the experience and abilities of participants.

b. The aim and purpose of the excursion.

c. Appropriate group sizes for the activity.

d. Location for the activity.

e. Are participants confident with heights and/or water?

f. Consult with the provider to determine risks and mitigations.

g. Informing parents/guardians of the nature of the activities and any residual risks.

13.8 Where there is doubt as to the nature of the activity the Visit Leader should consult with Moray Council's Technical Expert in the early stages of planning.

GLOSSARY

Going Out There	Scottish Government Policy website for outdoor education
BMG	British Mountain Guide is an internationally recognised qualification and allows the guide to lead parties in the world's most challenging mountain environments.
MIC	Mountaineering Instructor Certificate qualifies the leader for winter climbing anywhere in the UK.
MIA	The Mountaineering Instructor Award is for climbing instructors working in summer conditions.
IML	International Mountain Leader is an award that allows leaders to lead groups in mountain outside of the UK.
WML	Winter Mountain Leader allows leaders to lead groups in UK mountains in Winter condition as well as Summer.
ML	Mountain Leader, also referred to as Mountain Leader Summer, allows leaders to lead in UK mountains in Summer conditions.
SPA	Single Pitch Award
CWA	Climbing Wall Assistant
WGL	Walking Group Leader
Visit Leader	Person nominated by Head of Establishment to coordinate visit planning and lead the visit
Visit Assistant	Person who supports the Visit Leader in managing the group and/or an individual
Supervisor	Person with a qualification that enables them to lead an activity
Supervising Adult	Person who supervises young people during an excursion, either during an activity, while travelling, resting or in a residential setting
Base Contact	Person (normally a member of the centre's Senior Leadership Team) nominated by the Head of Establishment as the point of contact for the visit
Technical Expert	Person(s) nominated by Moray Council to provide advice and support to Heads of Establishment, Visit Leaders and Supervisors