Bunyaville Environmental Education Centre

Curriculum Activity Risk Assessment

Activity Details

			CARA Creation Date: 04-Dec-2025
Activity:	**Animal Observation and Handling**		
Activity Scope:	Guideline review date: 24 September 2025 This guideline demonstrates the minimum safety standard for student participation in activities involving observing and handling animals and/or animal remains (e.g. bones, skins) to support curriculum delivery within, and external to, a laboratory or classroom. Such activities include, but not limited to, care of classroom pets, livestock husbandry activities, collecting of frog spawn and observation of animals in their natural surroundings or of exhibited animals. The Department of Education is committed to ensuring that curriculum activities are planned for and managed in accordance with the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (Qld), to ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of students, staff and others. Depending on the scope of this activity, other risk assessments may be required when planning. Curriculum activities encompassing more than one CARA guideline (e.g. biological activities, Agricultural activities (stockyards)) must comply with the requirements of all CARA guidelines appropriate to the activity. For curriculum activities involving marine animals (e.g. fishing), consult the marine organism activities guideline. For activities conducted at a non-Department of Education venue, and/or when engaging external expertise, request written risk assessment advice and attach it to this CARA record. For activities conducted off-site, schools must comply with the school excursions procedure.		
Guidelines:	https://education.qld.gov.au/curriculum/stages-of-schooling/CARA/activity-guidelines/animal-observation-handling		
Activity Description:	Handling of minibeasts takes place in Bunyaville Conservation Park, BEEC school grounds and in off-site locations. Handling of minibeasts commonly occurs in activities such as ‘leaf shake’ and ‘leaf litter search’ and includes handling flora and fauna using microscopes, binoculars and annayloupes.		
Inherent Risk Level:	Medium		
Inherent Risk Level Description:	Activities at medium risk locations (e.g. school oval, chicken coop) and/or with medium risk equipment (e.g. electrical equipment) and/or animals that may cause a minor injury or illness (e.g. larger domesticated animals such as dogs, sheep).		
Start Date:	Tuesday, 27 January, 2026	End Date:	Friday, 11 December, 2026
On School Grounds:	No	Is parental permission required for this activity?	Yes

Activity Requirements	
• A registered teacher must be appointed to maintain overall responsibility for the activity. • Teachers, in collaboration with other adult supervisors of the planned activity, determine additional risks, hazards and control measures relevant to the activity and the specific school/group circumstances in order to lift the safety standard above the minimum identified in the CARA guideline. Consult review comments from previous CARA records to improve safety standards based on the advice from the previous supervisors of the activity at the school. • Prior consultation and collaboration with local expertise (e.g. park ranger, property owners) is required for local advice, emergency support mechanisms and additional supervision requirements to ensure participant and public safety. Obtain approvals and permits as required. • Schools must comply with animal welfare legislation. Consult the department's animals in education webpage. Comply with animals in Queensland state schools procedure when handling live animals. • Include any additional information used to support student safety in the activity (e.g. resources from Standard operating procedures from Queensland Schools Animal Ethics Committee's forms and publications, published activities or online risk assessment tools) on the CARA record. • Schools must manage animals in accordance with the Infection control procedure. Utilise the Infection control guideline for practical implementation advice.	☑
Students • Schools must consider age, maturity and skill level of students when planning curriculum activities. Adjustments are required for students with disability to support access and participation in the curriculum. Consult with the parents/carers of students with disability, or when appropriate the student, to ensure risks related to their child's participation in the activity are identified and managed. • Schools must consult current student medical information and/or health plans in accordance with the managing students' health support needs at school procedure. Record information about any student condition (e.g. physical or medical such as epilepsy) that may inhibit safe engagement in the activity and include specific support measures within emergency procedures. • For participants with known allergies, schools must comply with the supporting students with asthma and/or at risk of anaphylaxis at school procedure and the school's anaphylaxis risk management plan, including an adult supervisor of the activity with anaphylaxis training.	☑

Emergency and first-aid
 	
• Emergency plans and injury management procedures must be established for foreseeable incidents (e.g. provision of CPR and first aid)) and incorporate the advice from local authorities (e.g. location of AED).
• Adult supervisors must have:
  ◦ emergency contact details of all participants
  ◦ a medical alert list and a process for administering student medication
  ◦ communication equipment suitable to conditions (e.g. mobile phone) and a process for obtaining external assistance and/or receiving emergency advice.
• Safety procedures must be determined for the location (e.g. using specialised equipment, handling animals safely) and are to be informed by local authorities and incorporate advice from off-site facility, if relevant.
• Access is required to first aid equipment and consumables suitable for foreseeable incidents. Refer to Queensland Poisons Information Centre for further information about types of poisoning and first aid treatment, or phone **13 11 26**.
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Induction and instruction • Induction is required for all adult supervisors on emergency procedures (e.g. location of first aid support and equipment, evacuation assembly points) and safety procedures (e.g. raising alarm). If the activity is conducted at an off-site facility, induction is to be informed by advice provided in consultation with expertise at the location (e.g. zookeeper, farm owner). • Ensure staff and students are aware of the potential disease transmission risks associated with the animal or animal part being handled. • Ensure staff and students are aware that exposure to animal faeces, body fluids, birth products or enclosures contaminated with these materials can expose them to disease risks. • Establish a class procedure in case an animal escapes or is unexpectedly encountered in the field or school grounds. This procedure would relate to the anticipated class reaction, specific location (e.g. classroom, farmyard or bush), capture equipment, particular animal or type of animal. • Instruction is required for students and adult supervisors on correct techniques (e.g. observing and handling animals safely). Rule-reminders are to be provided throughout the activity. • Teacher demonstrations are recommended to exemplify safe and hygienic practices and techniques.	☑
Consent Parent consent is required for all activities conducted off-site and all extreme risk level activities conducted onsite. It is strongly recommended that parent consent is obtained for high risk level activities conducted on-site.	☑

Risk Management Details

Supervision	
Principals, in consultation with the qualified adults, make final supervision decisions for the activity that considers the local context.	
Appropriate adult supervision must be provided to manage the activity safely i.e. prevent an incident from occurring and manage an incident if one were to occur, including managing emergency situations. The principal must give active consideration to the minimum standards set in the CARA guideline for the activity, the CARA planner and the risk assessment when determining the appropriate level of supervision. *See Number of adult supervisors (below).* Participants must adhere to all rules and advice communicated by the facility operator/owner and any safety signage at the facility/location. Before the activity, all adult supervisors: • must be familiar with the contents of the CARA record, including the Emergency and Supervision Plans. During the activity, all adult supervisors: • must provide active and direct supervision – be constantly vigilant, attentive and rescue ready • must comply with control measures from the CARA record and adapt as hazards arise • maintain the duty of care associated with any use of an animal. Follow the relevant standard operating procedures from Queensland Schools Animal Ethics Committee's forms and publications. • must not to handle animals that are not positively identified by a qualified adult supervisor. All animals that cannot be positively identified are to be considered potentially dangerous and are to be managed safely by a qualified adult supervisor. Refer to Department of Environment and Science and Queensland Museum's common and dangerous snakes. The activity must be suspended if the conditions become unfavourable (e.g. animal distress). Unfamiliar activities (e.g. from online sources) must be trialled without students to identify foreseeable hazards and plan safety processes. Do not proceed if risks of the activity outweigh educational outcomes. **Number of adult supervisors** Principals, in consultation with the qualified adults of the activity, determine the final number of supervisors to fulfil instructional, emergency and supervision roles for the local context that consider the nature of the activity, students' ages, abilities and specialised learning, access and/or health needs. In some instances, the final supervision ratio may be 1:1. If the minimum safety standard cannot be met, modify the activity (or elements of it) and use the hierarchy of controls to implement alternative control measures to meet or exceed the minimum safety standard (e.g. reduce the number of students participating at any one time). *See FAQ's for further support.	☑
This activity is supervised by a minimum of 1 qualified teacher and at least 1 supervising adult. When required a Centre teacher/USO orientates the visiting teacher before the activity begins. Before this activity, Bunyaville EEC staff are familiar with the contents of the CARA record. CARA's are available on Bunyaville EEC website for viewing.	

Supervisor Qualifications	
Qualifications support the minimum safety standard for this activity. Principals make final decisions* in determining supervisor capability (competence, relevance and currency) and whether the activity leader meets an appropriate teaching standard. *See FAQ's for further support.	
All adult supervisors must comply with the working with children authority—Blue Cards procedure .	☐
Qualified adults for the activity **Recovery/emergency – CPR, First aid, Rescue**	
An adult with current emergency qualifications is required to be quickly accessible to the activity area. Emergency qualifications include: • HLTAID009 Provide cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) • HLTAID011 Provide first aid • Anaphylaxis accreditation. Refer to the anaphylaxis guidelines for Queensland state schools for students with known allergies, and, if relevant, your school's anaphylaxis risk management plan.	☑
At least one adult supervisor is required to be a registered teacher or other adult supervisor working under the direct supervision of a registered teacher, with competence (knowledge and skills) in handling animals relevant to the level of risk identified.	☑
See FAQ's for further support.	

Facilities and Equipment	
Location must be suitable for the activity being undertaken to ensure safe participation and that safety rules and procedures can be followed. Undertake a reconnaissance of new or infrequently used locations to ascertain suitability.	☑
Field guides (e.g. Queensland Museum app), charts and/or keys must be consulted to correctly identify species.	☑
All electrical equipment in schools must be managed in accordance with the department's guide to managing electrical equipment in departmental schools and workplaces.	☑
Consult chemicals in curriculum activities for support in assessing the risks of chemicals used with/by students in curriculum activities. If a CARA record is required in OneSchool, a summary of chemicals, plant, equipment and/or materials used in the activity must be provided by entering directly onto the CARA record in OneSchool or by attaching a summary. Sample templates are provided on chemicals in curriculum activities and plant, equipment and materials in curriculum activities.	☐

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Participants must wear personal protective equipment as relevant (e.g. enclosed footwear, safety gloves).	☑
Other personal protective equipment appropriate to the activity may include lab standard eye protection, appropriate face protection (e.g. mask to protect against airborne toxins).	☐
First aid equipment and consumables, as required. All emergency equipment and processes (e.g. eye wash unit) must be functional.	☑
Clean up equipment as necessary (e.g. dustpan, waste bags, spill kit, disinfectants).	☑

Hazards and Control Measures

Environmental hazards	

Animal bites/stings - Stings, poisoning, infections
• Advise students not to handle animals until explicitly instructed by the qualified adult supervisor.
• Avoid deliberate contact with wild animals. Respond appropriately to approaching wildlife.
• Treat all wounds and bites immediately for Infection control.
• If participating outside:
  ◦ adhere to established practices regarding the use of insect repellent, outlined in insect viruses and allergies
  ◦ continually assess threat of wildlife appropriate to the location. Immediately move the participants to a safe location if dangerous or unidentified wildlife are detected or suspected.
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Environmental conditions - Weather, surfaces, surrounds
• Constantly monitor and assess the animal for distress, pain or injury resulting from the activity. Assess, and ensure staff and students are aware of, the likely impact of environmental conditions (e.g. noise, adverse weather) on the behaviour of a particular animal.
• When participating outside:
  ◦ The school's sun safety strategy must be followed
  ◦ Assess weather (Bureau of Meteorology and environmental conditions prior to participation.
  ◦ Follow the managing excessive heat in schools guidelines when participating in very hot or extreme heat conditions.
  ◦ Ensure drink breaks occur regularly. Make water available for individual participants between drink breaks.
  ◦ Ensure warm clothing is prepared for cold weather conditions. Monitor participants for cold related illness (e.g. hypothermia).
• When participating at night:
  ◦ Provide appropriate lighting/illumination.
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Biological hazards - Fluids (e.g. blood, saliva) • Remain aware of the allergen and disease risks associated with dust, dry matter and airborne organisms (e.g. diseases that can pass from animals to humans such as Q fever). • Implement appropriate handling and protective measures relevant to the route of transmission of potential zoonoses as outlined in appendix 1 of Animal contact guidelines . Establish and follow hygiene guidelines when handling animals, their food and water, and when cleaning out cages and pens. • Handle animals as little as possible, using protective equipment (e.g. leather gloves) when appropriate. • Ensure all animals are screened thoroughly for parasites (e.g. ticks and fleas) and students are warned of the potential hazards, symptoms and course of remedial action. • Ensure animal remains (e.g. skeletons) are free of body tissue prior to handling. • Wash hands and other contaminated areas of the body with soap and water before leaving the activity site. • Clean tools and equipment following use to reduce the risk of contamination or accidental exposure to biological hazards. • Dispose of hazardous biological materials using a double-bagging technique.	☑
Facilities and equipment hazards	
Faulty or dangerous equipment • Conduct regular checks of agricultural infrastructure for safety hazards or broken equipment (fences, water troughs, crush, gates, etc.). • Check equipment for damage before and during the activity.	☑
Chemicals • All chemicals required for the decontamination processes must be arranged in advance and be readily available. • Instruct students in the appropriate storage and administration of veterinary medicines and chemical treatments, as relevant.	☐
Manual handling • Assess the size and temperament of, and the potential for injury by, the animals being observed and/or handled. • Use correct manual handling processes when lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling or carrying. • Use aids for safe handling, lifting and carrying (e.g. guards, safety steps and mobile trolleys), as appropriate.	☑
Wastes • Schools must maintain, store, transport and dispose of waste materials appropriately (e.g. use clinical and related waste guideline). Such materials include, but not limited to, animal wastes and used equipment and instruments (e.g. gloves, husbandry disposables). • Dispose of waste as soon as possible after the activity.	☑
Student considerations	

Student issues - Student numbers, special needs, high risk behaviours, medical conditions, separation from the group • Record information about any student condition (e.g. physical or medical, such as epilepsy) • Remove accessories (e.g. jewellery, lanyards) before participating. • Ensure fingernails and hair and clothing (e.g. long hair, loose shirts) do not pose a hazard. • Instruct participants in appropriate low-stress handling techniques for the particular animal or species. Assess the capacity of individuals to handle and restrain an animal using low-stress handling techniques. Monitor participants for signs of fear and/or hesitancy. • Account for all equipment, chemicals and resources (e.g. matches, sharp tools) after the activity. • Implement procedures (e.g. buddy system, roll marking mechanisms) to account for all participants.	☑
Additional links Creating Healthier Workplaces - Equipment and machinery resources Department of Primary Industries Australian school science information support for teachers and technicians	

Planning Considerations

Which students will be involved?

- Consider the number of students, size of student groups and students' capabilities e.g. age, experience, competence, fitness, maturity.
- Consider any individual student needs e.g. personalised learning, support provisions (including behaviour support plans), health management (including health plans and prescribed medication requirements).

Where will the students be?

- Consider the location of the activity e.g. remote/easily accessible, public /private, school/classroom/workshop/other.
- Is the number of students appropriate for the available space?
- If outdoors – sunsafe strategies are implemented; weather and environmental conditions are assessed before and during activity (e.g. temperature, storms, water currents, tides); and strategies to reduce the likelihood of viruses, allergies and skin infections caused by insects (e.g. ticks, mosquitoes, spiders) and other animals are applied.
- The site is checked for hazards (e.g. poisonous plants, dangerous animals, uneven terrain, barbed wire,) and necessary controls implemented.
- Activities are appropriately situated in relation to buildings, pedestrians, members of the public, vehicles and other activities e.g. designated areas for activity, spectators and vehicles are established.

What will the students be doing?

- Consider the nature and duration of the activity i.e. need for drinking water, food, rest, appropriate clothing, warm-up and warm-down.
- Instruction in rules and pre-requisite skills is provided.
- Student skills are developed in a progressive and sequential manner.
- First aid and emergency medical treatment provisions are appropriate for the type of activity and location e.g. first aid kit, first aid trained personnel, Ventolin®, Epipen®, and students' personal prescribed medications as required in health plans are available.
- Emergency response strategies are in place e.g. communication plans (e.g. mobile phone, walkie talkie), safety induction, evacuation plans.
- Hair, clothing, footwear and jewellery are worn in a manner that is appropriate and safe for the activity.
- Personal items, e.g. drink bottles, towels and mouthguards, will not be shared between students.

What will the students be using?

- Instruction in safety procedures and safe handling of equipment is provided.
- Equipment is suitable for the activity, properly maintained, appropriately used and complies with the relevant safety standard.
- Relevant department procedures and guidelines are adhered to for the use of equipment and work processes.

Who will be leading the activity?

- A registered teacher has overall responsibility for the activity.
- Sufficient adult supervision is in place to manage the activity safely (including in emergency situations).
- The activity leader has the competence (knowledge and skills) to plan, induct, instruct and manage the activity safely for students and others.
- There are sufficient adults present with current First Aid qualifications (including CPR) or ready access to qualified first aid personnel.
- Blue Card requirements are adhered to for leaders/volunteers.

☑ I have incorporated the above factors when planning my risk management strategies for this activity.

☑ Additional activity-specific requirements for students with specialised learning needs are provided in the Other Details box below.

When incursions go offsite from school grounds, BEEC centre teachers discuss suitable offsite locations with classroom teachers. Location is jointly decided.