



A Summary of the Standard Operating Procedures for Rock Climbing

Activity Description

For the purposes of Ekklesia Mountain High Program, rock climbing is the process of ascending natural cliffs and climbing walls. Associated activities include bouldering, single and multi pitch lead climbing, and single pitch top rope climbing.

Policy

In harmony with the Health and Safety Policy of **Darren Patterson Christian Academy**, those involved in planning, organizing and leading activities will ensure all reasonable care is taken to protect the health and safety of students.

Staff

Staff members are those adults who provide the supervisory, instructional and educational elements of the activity. All staff members will be approved by the school council.

All staff members must comply with current State Education Department police check requirements by completing background checks.

Leadership

1. Those in leadership must have experience and qualifications relevant to the Training Package for the Outdoor Recreation Industry.
2. Group Leader: The designated group leader must have the following documented experience, knowledge and skills:
 - **Experience in rock climbing activities (competent in single & multi pitch skills).**
 - **Ability to respond to emergency situations (outcomes of the risk management process).**
 - **Ability to provide First-Aid.**
 - **Ability to facilitate a group.**
 - **Ability to interpret and respond to prevailing and potential weather conditions.**
 - **Ability to deal with conflict.**
 - **Experience in monitoring group safety.**
 - **Compliance with appropriate State Laws regarding the activity.**
 - **Experience in occupational health and safety policies and procedures.**
 - **Experience in researching and planning risk assessments to minimise risk.**
3. Assistant: The designated assistant to the group leader should have sufficient experience in this activity and must:
 - Be able to assume a supervisory role during the activity.



- Be competent in emergency response procedures.
 - Have conferred with the instructor to establish the emergency response and supervision responsibilities.
4. Supervision: The Instructor in charge is responsible for the supervision strategy, which must be endorsed by the school council as a part of the excursion approval process.
- a. A minimum of two staff members must be present for each activity. One staff member is to have responsibility for instruction in the activity and the other is to assist the instructor, particularly in the event of an emergency.**
 - b. A ratio of 1:8 (top rope single pitch) for a group is given as a guide.**
 - c. The ratio of leaders to participants must be determined in pre-trip planning.
 - d. Decisions are based on:
 - Age, maturity and gender of students.
 - Ability and experience of students.
 - Needs of individuals.
 - Dynamics of the student group.
 - Experience, qualifications and skills of staff.
 - Location of the activity.
 - Anticipated conditions at the location.

Informed Consent

The school will receive consent from parents or guardians before their child may participate in adventure activities.

Informed consent will be given in writing and signed by parents and guardians.

First Aid

At least two members of staff responsible for each group of students must hold, as a minimum, a current Wilderness Advance First Aid and have a first aid kit applicable to the level of training. The director of the program must hold, as a minimum, a current Wilderness First Responder.

Course Planning Considerations

General

When planning any course, Instructors will meet to do the following:

- Obtain the permission of land management agencies where required (State forests, national parks).
- Activity objectives (desired outcomes) and participant expectations.



- Conduct a risk analysis and develop appropriate strategies to reduce the risk associated with identified hazards.
- Select the location, duration and degree of difficulty of the activity to match the age, fitness, skill level, maturity and experience of participants.
- Use an emergency response plan to cover all potential emergencies. These may include alternate routes or locations, escape routes or cancellation of the activity if weather or other conditions are unfavorable. Emergency planning should include emergency communication that may include a Radio, PLB or Sat phone.

Rock Climbing Specific

During any rock climbing activity, Instructors will take the following steps to minimize risks:

- Exercise extreme caution when approaching the cliff edge. All participants must be attached to a safety line when they are within 10 feet of the cliff edge. Helmets are to be worn at all times. When at the bottom of the cliff participants must stand in close to avoid falling rocks.
- Ensure that the anchors are suitable for attaching the climbing setup to, so that the anchors will not give way. Make sure that the system is fail-safe by using multiple anchors and rigging lines, in case one of the anchors/rigging lines break.
- Ensure that all participants' helmets and harnesses are worn correctly and are tight enough.
- Be aware that some participants may have a fear of heights and will need to be given an appropriate level of emotional support.
- All activities are Challenge by Choice. Students will not be forced to do an activity.
- See below for more specific risks and controls of those risks.



Risks	Controls
<p>Fall from Height</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be roped up on any 4th class or higher terrain. • Students will have proper attire including UIAA approved harnesses and helmets, and will obtain instruction on the proper fit and limitations of each item. • Students will undergo “ground school” prior to any actual climbing. They will learn belay systems, top rope anchors, and general safety while climbing. • Students will be taught to remain at least 10 feet from any cliff edge. • Students/Instructors who are operating within 10 feet of the cliff edge must be on belay or tethered to a secure anchor. • Students will be taught to not free solo or climb unroped above 10 feet. • Bouldering under 10 feet is allowed as long as instructors are present, students are using a crash pad, and students have undergone “Bouldering School” to learn the proper spotting techniques. There is no bouldering when students are more than 2 hours from definitive care. • Students will not rappel without some sort of belay. Students will be taught both the “fireman” belay and the top rope belay while rappelling.
<p>Students Belaying Other Students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will have to pass “ground school” before they can belay on the rock. • Students will be taught the importance of constant attention to the climber. • Students will be taught the importance of pre-climb commands and checks. They will learn the 4 H’s (Helmet, Hardware, Harness, and Human) as a way to check to make sure students are using the equipment properly. Students will learn the “On Belay? Belay On, Climbing? Climb On” commands. • Students will learn to take in rope, place left hand (right hand for left-handed belayers) on the rope behind the back to keep a break hand constantly on the rope, slide the right hand (left hand for left-handed belayers) closer to the belay device while left hand is on the rope, and then repeat. Students will learn to never take their right hand (left hand for left-handed belayers) off the rope. • Students will be taught proper speed and technique of lowering a student. Students will be taught to keep 2 hands on the break side of the rope while lowering. • Student belayers will be under supervision of instructors while climbing. • Students will have a “bee stinger” (students holding the rope behind the belayer) as a safety backup until instructors have determined they are fully competent belayers.
<p>Anchors Failing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The director of the climbing program will undergo top rope management training. • Instructors will undergo anchor building training prior to the school year, taught by the director and previous instructors. • Instructors will be evaluated for proper anchor building techniques prior to taking students out. • First year instructors will not be alone with students. They will have an experienced instructor overseeing the process. • Students will take “Anchor Building School” prior to building anchors for climbing. • Student anchors must be passed by an experienced instructor prior to climbing.



<p>Gear Failing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructors will be taught how to properly inspect climbing gear. • Gear will be inspected before taken into the field AND when it returns to the shelf. Instructors will fill out appropriate forms before AND after gear goes into the field. • Rock climbing gear will not be checked out to people outside of the school community. Instructors will not be allowed to use climbing gear for personal use. • The director of the climbing program will keep a detailed log of the use of the climbing gear. • The program will not purchase used climbing gear. • The program will purchase UIAA certified gear.
<p>Slips and Trips</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will have appropriate closed toed shoes for walking around the climbing site. • Students will be taught proper techniques for how to descend.
<p>Falling Objects (including rocks)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructors and students will review site for loose rock prior to climbing. • Students will be taught about the “arc of safety” and if students are inside the arc, students will wear a helmet. • Students will be taught to be aware of rock fall, and to yell “ROCK” if they dislodge one. • Students will be taught proper techniques when they hear someone else yell “ROCK”. • Students will be taught to not drag ropes, webbing, or other cord along the top of climbs to prevent dislodging of boulders.
<p>Entanglement (including hair, clothes, etc...)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will remove all jewelry prior to climb/rappel, student with long hair will tie back prior to rappelling, and loose clothing will be tucked inside harness or taken off prior to climbing. • Students will be taught proper rappelling techniques to prevent entanglement. • Instructors will be taught proper ways of helping students get objects that have become entangled. Instructors will use a moveable rappel set up with a Munter Hitch and Mule knot and overhand knot backup. • Students will not use Figure 8 rappelling devices as these devices are the easiest for items to become entangled.
<p>Excessive Speed while Rappelling</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be under at least one appropriate belay system to slow descent. • Students will be taught why it is hard on gear to rappel too quickly. • Student belayers and rappellers will be under direct supervision of instructors.
<p>Medical Emergencies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructors will carry a first aid kit on all courses. • Experienced Instructors will have at least Wilderness First Aid training. • Director of climbing program will have at least Wilderness First Responder training. • Students will complete extensive medical background information forms to keep instructors fully informed of any medical situations. Instructors will read through all of the student’s medical information prior to the climbing course, and will carry all of the student’s medical information into the field.
<p>Litigation Suits</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All parents of students and students will read through and sign assumption of risk/consent forms. Students will not be allowed to attend the event if these are not signed.



Supervision	Activity	Staff Numbers	Student Numbers
	Single-pitch top belay	2	Up to 8
		3	9-14
		4	15-20
	Single-pitch ground belay	2	Up to 12
		3	13-18
		4	19-24
	Tramline multi-pitch	2	Up to 4
		3	5-6
		4	7-8
	Independent multi-pitch	2	Up to 4
		3	5-6
		4	7-8

Number of Students for 2012-2013 School Year: 6 enrolled in Wilderness Program

Staff for 2012-2013 School Year

Director of the Ekklesia Mountain High Wilderness Program/Lead Instructor:

Ben Little: Age 35

Professional Experience/Training:

Wilderness First Responder/CPR/AED through May 2013

Top Rope Climbing Instructor Class through American Climbing Institute

Solid Rock Outdoor Ministries: Instructor Training, Mountaineering Training, Rock Climbing Training, General Backpack Training, Leadership Training, Instructed 2 Summers for SROM

Darren Patterson Christian Academy: Teacher 9 years, Athletic Director 3 years, Varsity Volleyball Coach 6 years, Varsity Girls Basketball Coach 6 years, Varsity Boys Basketball Coach 1 year, Chaplain 5 years, Director and Developer of Ekklesia Mountain High 3 years

Deer Valley Ranch: Teen Leader 2 years, Hiking Program Guide 5 years, Rock Climbing Lead Guide 6 years

Taken multiple school groups rock climbing, general backpacking

Youth Pastor 3 years—took group rock climbing multiple times

Personal Experience:

Hiked\Climbed over 100 summits including all of the 14er's in Colorado. Many were multi-pitch rock climbing routes i.e. Notch Coulior on Long's Peak, Ellingwood Arete on Crestone Needle. Many also were climbed in winter or steep snow routes.

Climbed Gannett Peak and Grand Teton via Exum Ridge in Wyoming

Rock Climbing at 5.10 to 5.11 level for 12 years

Numerous Sport Routes up to 5.11

Numerous Traditional Routes up to 5.9

Numerous Multi-pitch Routes up to 5.10



Other Instructors/Teachers:

Carmen Curro: Age 25

Professional Experience/Training:

Wilderness First Responder/CPR through May 2013

Top Rope Climbing Instructor Class through American Climbing Institute

Noah's Ark Whitewater Rafting Company: Training in multi-day backpacking, rock climbing anchor and system construction, whitewater rafting/swift water rescue training, rock climbing systems instructor for first year guides, rock climb guide for 5 years

Darren Patterson Christian Academy: First year teacher, Volunteer instructor for Ekklesia Mountain High Wilderness Program 1 year, helped lead 4 ten day wilderness courses ranging from backpacking, to rock climbing, to winter, to the Grand Canyon

Youth Pastor 2 years

Personal Experience:

Climbed multiple 14'ers in Colorado

Climb at 5.10 to 5.11 level for 5 years

Many Sport Routes up to 5.10

A few multi-pitch routes up to 5.8

Linsey Brassler: Age 24

Professional Experience/Training:

Basic First Aid/CPR/AED Training through May 2013

Darren Patterson Christian Academy: training in rock climbing, leading backpacking courses, winter travel, and leadership skills, 1 year volunteer instructor for Ekklesia Mountain High Wilderness Program, Teacher's aide and Office Aide 2 years

Professional Photographer 4 years owns small business

Personal Experience:

Hiked many 14'ers

Top Rope Climber for 3 years up to 5.9 level