

Cable Bay Trail / Dodd's Narrows Off-Site Experience Safety Plan

Area Description:

The Cable Bay Trail is a 6km round trip hike from the official parking lot in the Cedar area of Nanaimo. The trail itself is well marked and has a maximum grade of less than 20 degrees. The last section of the trail follows the shoreline but does not contain any exposed areas. Dodd's Narrows are beside a rocky shoreline.

Risk Assessment:

1. **Risk:** Inclement weather. Due to the length of the hike, a period of extended rain could impact the comfort and safety of those students who have not brought effective rain gear. Exposure to rain or cold could result in hypothermia. **Management:** Students will be provided with a list of required clothing that will ensure comfort and safety. Those who do not bring the required gear will be unable to participate and will engage in an alternative activity. Students will be introduced to dangers of hypothermia during pre-trip briefing. They will be encouraged to always share any level of discomfort they might be experiencing so that remedial action can be taken immediately.
2. **Risk:** Multiple trails and becoming lost. Though the main trail is very identifiable, there is a network of trails in the area and should students stray there is a chance of them becoming lost. **Management:** Buddy and group system. Student will be assigned with a permanent buddy during the entire trip, with the understanding that they are responsible for one another. Additionally, students will be assigned to a larger group that will be under the direction of a teacher or volunteer.
3. **Risk:** Muddy trail. Though not exceedingly steep, the trail does contain sections where students could slip if there has been rain. **Management:** Students will be guided on correct descent methods in these areas. They will be encouraged to move slowly and deliberately, watching foot placements.
4. **Risk:** Wild animals. The forested area along the trail is remote and there is a chance both bears and cougars may reside there. However, the trail is popular with hikers and dog walkers. **Management:** Students will be under constant supervision, they will be introduced to bear aware strategies, they will stay with the main group or maintain a buddy system.
5. **Risk:** Remote location. At the farthest point of the trail, the group will be 3km away from a road. This is an important factor to consider as Ambulance Services would be unable to reach this location. Only Search and Rescue services would be able to access the end of the trail. **Management:** Students will be briefed on the importance of safety before the hike. The remoteness of the area will be stressed and a high level of behavioral expectations will be set in place. Strict adherence to these rules will be a condition of participation.
6. **Risk:** Dodd's Narrow channel shoreline. The shoreline beside the actual channel is rocky and slippery. Tidal forecasts show that during the hours of our planned visit, the

current will be strong. If students get too close to the edge of the water, any slip could result in a disastrous outcome. **Management:** Clear instructions will be given before and during the trip that all students must stay at least 5 meters back from the waterline. Under no circumstances are learners to move any closer.

7. **Risk:** Hunger and/or lack of food/water. Students will be hiking a distance of 6km in a remote area where there are no sources of food or clean drinking water. Without the necessary supplies, students could become dehydrated or exhausted. **Management:** Students will all receive a trip package that will list the food and water requirements for participation in the trip. At minimum each student will be required to bring 1 litre of water and 3,000 calories of food. Without these supplies students will not be permitted to participate.

Supervision Plan:

- Teacher/Volunteer to Student Ratio - At minimum the planned activity will utilize a 1:8 ratio.
- Level of Supervision - Constant visual at all times will be maintained.
- Group setting: Both a buddy system and small group system will be in place.
- Head counts: This strategy will be utilized throughout the day at one hour intervals.
- Hiking Strategy: Teacher will lead the hiking group and teacher/volunteer will sweep.
- Trip plan: DBES Principal will have copy of official trip plan that will contain expected times for departure and return, number of students, and any individual medical information.

Volunteer Plan:

- All volunteers will be guardians of participating students.
- All volunteers will be required to show proof of criminal record check.
- Volunteers will have a face-to-face briefing with guiding teachers before day of trip. They will be given a copy of the trip plan and will be told of their roles for the day.