

The educational trip involving one year 13 Optional PE class is planned to go to Whakapapa, Mt Ruapehu in National Park.

What could go wrong on the trip?

The risk of a trip to Mt Ruapehu is high with many causal factors as to what could go wrong, there are controllable risks that with good preparation can be minimized or even eliminated and uncontrollable risks which must be taken into account and prepared for although there is nothing that you can do to stop these risks, again with good planning and preparation can minimize the effects if they were to happen. Firstly the controllable risks such as with transportation there is risk for a break down or accidents during the trip there and home. There are risks such as people being injured and going missing or getting sick. All of these risks can be controlled and minimized with effective risk management such as completing a RAMS form prior to the trip, which record and manage potential losses.

People issues are ones such as inexperienced staff or guides which can be managed by checking that they are appropriately qualified and experienced, also that the leader-participant ratio is not appropriate which is easily managed by making sure of numbers prior to the trip and ensuring that there are enough experienced people to care for the less experienced or skilled people. The reality is people are not always going to do what is best or what you want them to do so participants who are unwilling to follow instructions, rules or regulations and who do not listen and have poor attitudes can cause higher risk so to manage and control this rules and regulations should be gone over prior to the trip and explained why they must be followed and also not pairing together students who distract each other or who cause each other to become disruptions to the group. By having these management measures can cause unplanned outcomes to have less of an impact on the whole group.

Equipment can be a serious risk issue during a trip and can cause injuries if it is not suitable and checked prior to leaving or using it. Old or bad equipment can break and cause injury so an experienced leader should check these before leaving on the trip. If participants do not have enough gear such as clothing for all weather possibilities and the right clothing for these conditions such as polypropylene for the retention of heat, they could become very sick and in danger from hypothermia without the right clothing for the environment. To manage that there should be a checklist given to participants in advance of the trip to ensure students know what they should be packing. This will be related to the people running the trip and their experience and knowledge in the outdoors. They should have an influence on what clothing is bought. If students' don't bring this equipment then that could put them in danger when on the mountain. Included in this should be appropriate safety gear to minimize injury such as helmets, wrist guards and first aid kits for leaders. Gear should be checked when being returned so that it can be documented as to what condition it is in. This will prevent gear breaking and causing injury. Experienced leaders will complete these forms correctly and know when gear needs to be replaced or not. Not having a good transportation vehicle can cause an accident or a break down so to minimize the risk of this the vehicle should be inspected for WoF and registration and that it is properly serviced before leaving to ensure that there are no mechanical malfunctions. Also to minimize risk during transport leaders should prepare for any type of weather or terrain which means being sure to have a 4WD or having chains in case of icy or snowy terrain, because the weather can change in an instant with no warning.

The last issue is environmental hazards, because weather can change in an instant all participants should be prepared for any conditions, and having checklists help this, which ties in with equipment issues. However environmental issues include unexpected terrain that can be managed by leaders knowing the experience and skills of all participants and knowing where they are able to get to and where they can't. This can all be worked out by planning prior to the trip snow planet visits to assess skills of participants.

All of these possibilities have to be considered well in advance of the trip.

School policies can also be an issue associated with the running of this trip. These policies include students not being allowed cell phones, however due to the nature of the trip students will be allowed to take cell phones in case of an on mountain emergency. This would be an appropriate time to use phones as if you are skiing with friends away from staff and there is an accident that needs to be reported then having a phone will enable staff to do this. However this is the only time they will be able to use their phones, will be to contact the leaders of the group. However the wider implications of this is that if something happens rumors can be spread and taken well out of context and parents can find out and think that an accident is far worse than it really is. Also in the event of an emergency appropriate measures must be taken from the school in order to contact guardians and if students use cell phones people can find out the wrong information. Students could also contact each other with incorrect information and this could lead to emotional stress on students of the information is misinterpreted by others. School policies also include that there is to be no misconduct especially where a student's behaviour is a danger to herself or to others. In this case the student will be sent home at the parent's expense. This misconduct also includes the possession and or distribution of drugs, alcohol or cigarettes, which is where normal school rules apply. In the event of any of these misconducts the student will be immediately sent home.