

Residential Care Services Fact Sheet – High risk activities information sheet and risk assessment process

High and very-high risk activities for children and young people, whether in sports, travel, or online, require careful risk assessment and management to ensure the child or young person's safety. Understanding and mitigating these risks is crucial for organisations and individuals involved in caring for children and young people.

The decision about a child or young person participating in a high or very-high risk activity is the responsibility of the child's guardian. For a child in the custody of the chief executive, use the Child Safety Practice Manual to determine who can make the decision each time a request for the child to participate in a high or very-high risk activity is received. (Refer to Procedure 5, [Social, sporting and recreational activities decisions—daily and overnight.](#))

For specific information identifying the individual child's guardian, contact the child's Child Safety Officer (CSO) or Senior Team Leader.

High and very-high risk activities

High risk and very-high risk activities may be defined as activities where:

- there is a high risk of injury to the child or young person or other people if the equipment or procedures associated with the activity are not used in the prescribed manner
- there is a risk of severe injury to the child or young person or other people
- there is a high likelihood, high probability or frequency of an injury or event occurring, or a significant consequence or impact if it does occur
- a high level of adult supervision of all aspects of the activity is required.

Examples of high or very-high risk activities include – but are not limited to – white water rafting, rock climbing, abseiling and high ropes courses. (Refer to Procedure 5, [Determine the level of risk.](#))

Whenever a child or young person requests to participate in water-based activities, for example, swimming in waterfalls, creeks or dams, consider whether the activity may be high or very-high risk.

Refer to the Queensland Government Parks and Forests website for more information about [water safety](#).

Step 1: Talk to the child

When a request is received for a child or young person to participate in a high or very-high risk activity, it is important for residential care staff to:

- obtain and consider the views of the child or young person about their participation in the high or very-high risk activity
- tell the child or young person about the approval process, including who is responsible for the decision
- tell the child or young person that a decision will be made or obtained in a timely way, to ensure that if consent is given, any delay in communicating the decision will not prevent the child or young person from undertaking the activity
- advise the child or young person of the decision, once it is made.

Step 2: Gather information about the activity

Prior to engaging in a high or very-high risk activity, residential care staff must consult their supervisor regarding the potential risks associated with the proposed activity by providing the following information:

- the nature, qualifications and credentials of the organisation or individuals providing the activity
- what protective strategies can be taken to minimise the level of risk including:
 - the level of adult supervision to be provided during the activity
 - the supply and enforced use of compulsory safety equipment, for example, whether a *Type 1 personal flotation device* is available when participating in boating activities
 - the child's access to necessary safety equipment, for example, if the residential care worker will assist the child/young person to have a mouthguard fitted
 - the potential hazards and risk level of the activity (Refer to Step 3 [Determine the level of risk and seek consent and approval for participation.](#))
- the insurance provisions provided in the event of an accident.

Step 3: Determine the level of risk and seek consent and approval for participation

Thorough risk assessments must be conducted to determine if an activity is high or very-high risk. The risks identified may be mitigated using protective equipment, or participation under specific guidelines (age restriction, adult supervision, and codes and regulations).

Determine the age of consent required by the activity's indemnity form (as some activities may allow consent by 16- or 17-year-olds). Present the information about the activity, child's views, carer's views and suitability of the activity for the child's age, developmental level and experience and seek consent from the child's guardian.

Consent for high or very-high risk activities for children and young people can be provided by their carer or non-family-based care service, or the senior team leader, depending on the type of child protection order the child or young person is subject to and who is organising the activity. (Refer to the [Decision making for a child](#) and the [Social, sporting and recreational activities decisions—daily and overnight](#) (Guardianship decisions (child in the guardianship of the chief executive) table.)

Where parents retain guardianship

If a child is in the custody of the chief executive but the parents retain guardianship, and a request is received for the child to participate in a high or very high-risk activity, engage with the child's CSO who will:

- contact both parents to advise of the request and explain the nature of the activity, the hazards and risks for the child
- provide both parents with a copy of any written information from the organisation offering the activity including consent forms. If an activity-specific form has not been provided, the CSO is to provide the [Guardian consent form for high risk and very high risk activities](#) form (please note this form can only be accessed by departmental staff).

If the parents provide consent for the child's participation in the activity, the CSO will:

- ensure the parents sign the consent form
- retain a signed copy of the consent forms and file appropriately
- provide the original signed copy to the organisation offering the activity
- inform the child and non-family-based case service of the parents' consent.

Ensure the correct approval is obtained for the child or young person before attending the planned high or very risk activity.

Seeking urgent guardianship decisions

During business hours requests should be made via the child's Child Safety Service Centre and CSO. Outside of business hours contact the Child Safety After Hours Service Centre (CSAHSC) hotline on freecall 1800 177 135 where an immediate response is required.