



## Excursion Information for Teachers

<b>Name of your organisation</b>	Ribbons of Blue / Waterwatch WA
<b>Location/Contact Details</b>	Excursions are conducted at local waterways. Sites are selected in consultation with the teacher in charge according to the suitability and safety of the site for the purpose of the excursion.
Physical Address	
Phone Number	(08) 6467 5127
Fax Number	(08) 6467 5532
Email Address	<a href="mailto:richard.olive@dec.wa.gov.au">richard.olive@dec.wa.gov.au</a>
Website Address	<a href="http://www.ribbonsofblue.wa.gov.au">www.ribbonsofblue.wa.gov.au</a>
Contact Person	Richard Olive (State Coordinator)
<b>Working with Ribbons of Blue</b>	
Our local creeks, rivers, estuaries and wetlands are special places and very rich learning environments; they are also in need of our care. Through Ribbons of Blue students undertake inquiry-based, hands-on activities that not only increase their understanding, but also enable them to make a difference to their local environment.	
<b>Purpose of the Excursion</b>	
Ribbons of Blue offers a range of activities linked in-depth to Science and Society and Environment curriculum outcomes. Activities can include water quality testing, macroinvertebrate sampling, assessment of nearby vegetation and threats to a waterbody; and, rehabilitation work. Ribbons of Blue has a network of Regional Coordinators who work with local schools tailoring excursions to meet the needs and issues of the local environment. Each Regional Coordinator can give information on what their local program includes. To find your Regional Coordinator visit <a href="http://www.ribbonsofblue.wa.gov.au">www.ribbonsofblue.wa.gov.au</a> or call the State Coordinator on (08) 6467 5127.	

## Environment

Ribbons of Blue conducts **no-cost** excursions with school groups on a regular basis at a variety of locations.

While the teacher in charge has ultimate responsibility for selecting the location, Ribbons of Blue will assist teachers assess the location for foreseeable and reasonable risks to determine if the proposed location is appropriate for the proposed excursion. This may include consideration of physical environment, seasonal, cultural and social factors. Visits to the location can be arranged on request prior to an excursion taking place.

Ribbons of Blue Regional Coordinators will confirm that the location owner holds the required public liability insurance cover and that this insurance is extended to students undertaking the proposed excursion.

## Transport

Transport is the responsibility of the school. Site specific parking and access details will be provided by the Regional Coordinator.

## Students' Capacity

The Ribbons of Blue program offers a variety of excursions which can be adapted to any age group, subject to regional programs. Coordinators can provide detailed information on each excursion, including the skills and prior knowledge students will require, to assist teachers with planning.

Ribbons of Blue will consult with teachers to ensure that the proposed excursion is suitable for the skill level of all students involved and that provisions have been made for any student with special learning needs.

In general the types of activities are:

- **Water quality testing:** Students use simple electronic meters to read pH and electrical conductivity and other simple instruments to measure temperature and turbidity. Results are recorded on data sheets and can be interpreted with previous data from the site or against common guidelines. Secondary students may use simple kits to determine levels of nutrients in the water.
- **Macroinvertebrate sampling:** Students sort water samples containing aquatic invertebrates, they then identify and classify the organisms found. The equipment used can include plastic containers, plastic tea spoons, identification charts, magnifying lens' and stereo microscopes, and data recording sheets.
- **Site assessment:** Students work in small groups to make observations and complete a checklist designed to give an indication of the condition of the surrounding vegetation and detail nearby activities that could affect water quality.
- **Revegetation activities (if offered)** can include tree planting using common garden equipment.

It is not essential for students to enter a waterbody to collect samples but it may be an important part of the learning experience for senior students to introduce them to correct sampling techniques.

For primary schools it is recommended that the teacher or coordinator should collect all samples and remove the need for any student to enter the water.

Whether students enter the water to collect samples depends on a variety of factors, including complying with the Department of Education and Training's water-based excursion requirements (see below). Site safety issues such as depth, flow, access to water, and the age and level of responsibility of the students will be considered in consultation with the qualified supervisor and / or teacher in charge.

If students of any age are permitted to enter the water, (no matter how shallow) then compliance with the Department of Education and Training's, "Outdoor Education and Recreation Activities" policy is essential. Section 19 of the policy covers water-based activities and requires that at least one member of the supervisory team holds a current, recognized lifesaving qualification such as RLSSA Bronze Medallion or an equivalent approved by the Director General. Compliance with this requirement is the responsibility of the school, including the provision of qualified personnel. *Note: Ribbons of Blue activities are exempt from compliance with the policy above only if there is **no** intention for students to enter the water.*

### **Supervisor/Supervisory Team**

Ribbons of Blue requires that all schools provide adult supervisors to an appropriate student ratio for the proposed excursion.

Ribbons of Blue will assist teachers to establish supervision strategies for the proposed excursion. Ribbons of Blue staff will lead, demonstrate and present activities but will not undertake any roles in a supervisory context (unless specifically agreed with the school supervision team).

### **External Provider Information**

Ribbons of Blue staff are trained to provide a safe and enjoyable excursion for students.

Ribbons of Blue staff are trained professionals who possess tertiary environmental science and/or teaching qualifications or relevant work experience.

Ribbons of Blue employees and contractors submit Consent to Obtain Personal Information form for police clearance to the Screening Unit of the Department of Education and Training when commencing employment and update as required. This information is entered onto the Department of Education's Screening Policy Database.

Ribbons of Blue employees comply with the requirements of the Working With Children Check.

Ribbons of Blue staff employed by State Government Agencies (Department of Water, Swan River Trust, Department of Environment and Conservation) have public liability insurance of \$250,000,000. Staff employed by other organizations including WAPRES, Manjimup Land Conservation District Committee and Cape to Cape Catchment Group may have different levels. Staff can provide a copy of the certificate of public liability on request.

### **Supervision Strategies**

<p>It is the responsibility of the school to develop a supervisory team that meets their specific requirements. The school supervisory team must accompany the students throughout the excursion to actively monitor behaviour and intervene as necessary. Please contact your Regional Coordinator to discuss the necessary supervision requirements for your proposed excursion.</p>
<p><b>Identification of Excursion Participants</b></p>
<p>This is the responsibility of the school.</p> <p>School uniform or some form of visual identification for each student is an option which may be considered by schools.</p> <p>Ribbons of Blue staff will wear a name badge and / or easily identifiable clothing.</p>
<p><b>Communication Strategies</b></p>
<p>A communication strategy between students and the supervisory team is the responsibility of the school. Ribbons of Blue will assist teachers to develop an appropriate communication strategy depending on the nature of the excursion and the site, this may include communication with excursion participants and emergency organisations.</p> <p>Ribbons of Blue may be able to provide access to resources such as mobile phones or satellite phones, which can be used in handling emergencies quickly and efficiently.</p>
<p><b>Emergency Response Plan</b></p>
<p>Schools will have their own emergency response plan pertaining to the particular needs of their students. Ribbons of Blue staff will advise and assist where possible with site specific emergency response planning.</p>
<p><b>Briefing Students and Supervisors</b></p>
<p>Students, teachers and supervisors will be briefed on arrival at the excursion site on all aspects of the excursion. Where possible, necessary information will be provided to the teacher and / or supervisors prior to the excursion. This information will vary with the nature of the excursion and the site.</p>
<p><b>Other Relevant Details</b></p>
<p>Please contact Ribbons of Blue to further discuss the educational opportunities available. Resources can also be accessed on our website <a href="http://www.ribbonsofblue.wa.gov.au">www.ribbonsofblue.wa.gov.au</a>.</p>
<p><b>This information is valid until 31 January 2009</b></p>

