



# ADDISON NORTHWEST SCHOOL DISTRICT PROCEDURE

## PROCEDURE VUHS Challenge Course Operating PROCEDURES

The Addison Northwest District Challenge courses will follow the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) in the "Guide for Challenge Course Operations" (GCCO) and Adventure Programming Training Manual (APTМ).

### Part 1: Logistics

#### 1. Course Manager

The VUHS Challenge Course Manager is VUHS PE Teacher Sarah Cook. VUHS Phone Number 802-877-2938 Cell Phone Number 802-373-5664

Vergennes Union High School, 50 Monkton Rd, Vergennes VT 05491

#### 2. Staff Qualifications:

##### High Element Facilitation

- Facilitation requires completion of Adventure Programming Training and Technical Skills Intensive (TSI) Course through Project Adventure.
- In order to maintain your current facilitation status on the high elements, everyone must complete one review sessions per year, prior to school starting.
- If there is a lapse in review session of two or more years, completion of Technical Skills Intensive (TSI) is required before facilitating the high elements.
- There must be a certified rescue person, (Ed Cook, Robyn Newton or Sarah Cook) on site in order for course to be used.

##### Low Element Facilitation

- Facilitation requires completion of the Adventure Programming Training through Project Adventure.
- In order to maintain your current facilitation status on the low elements, everyone must complete the review session prior to school starting.

##### Rescue Training:

- Every 3-5 years, Robyn Newton and Sarah Cook need to re-take ASAS Advanced Skills & Standards to refresh the rescue techniques.
- To maintain the ASAS certification, facilitators must complete two rescue review sessions per year at VUHS.

#### 3. Staff to Participant Ratio:

There is a wide range of appropriate staff to participant ratios. The ratio that we adopt will

depend on a number of factors including age and maturity of the participants, and what elements are being used.

#### **4. Course Inspection:**

- The course and equipment will be visually inspected by one or more of the qualified course facilitators prior to the start of school and again in the Spring.
- The course will be **officially** inspected once a year by Project Adventure.
- Visual inspections will occur by facilitators prior to use of each element.

#### **5. Inclement Weather:**

- During inclement weather, the facilitator will use their judgment to determine the safety of the participants on the course. If they feel the course or participants are unsafe the course will be shut down.
- If thunder is heard the course is immediately shut down and participants are sent inside until the facilitator determines the course is safe again.

#### **6. Equipment Storage:**

- All high and low ropes course equipment, including ladders, will be stored and locked in the project adventure shed behind the soccer dugouts during course use.
- During the winter months the ropes, harnesses and rescue bag will be stored in the PE closet adjacent to the middle school gym.
- All initiative games/props will be stored in the PE closet adjacent to the middle school gym.
- The following PE teachers have keys to the outdoor storage shed:  
Sarah Cook, Robyn Newton, Kyle Vickers, JP Benoit
- Anyone on the course who finds broken or damaged equipment must immediately contact the Course Manager and remove the equipment or discontinue use.

#### **7. Equipment Inspection and Maintenance:**

##### **Ropes:**

- Ropes should always be coiled using a mountaineer's coil and hung in the shed after use. If ropes are wet, they should be hung, uncoiled, to dry.
- When setting up ropes, facilitators should perform a tactile and visual inspection. If there is any imperfection found a further inspection is needed.
- Care should be taken to prevent rope from getting abused: Avoid Sunlight, Dirt, Chemicals and misuse (stepped on, dragged, etc).
- Place ropes in bags and hang the bags from wall. Never hang the rope directly from a nail.
- When putting rope away log the hours of use in the rope log in the shed.
- Rope life span is 10 years from date of purchase

**Harnesses:**

- Each participant should be inspecting their harness before putting it on. It should be inspected for significant wear, discoloration, stiffness, worn or broken stitching, defective buckles. If a harness fails a tactile and visual inspection it should be immediately given to the facilitator and retired from the challenge course use.
- Facilitators should conduct a visual inspection of harnesses before use.
- Harness lifespan is 10 years from date of purchase.

**Helmets:**

- Helmets should be fitted properly to the climber; it should not wobble side to side or front to back. Chin straps should be fastened and snug.
- Visually inspect helmets prior to use. If cracks or holes are discovered, it should be removed.
- Helmets should never be covered or placed in boxes/bins as they need to air out after use.
- Helmet lifespan is 10 years from date of purchase.

**Carabiners & Other Connectors:**

- Daily visual inspection of connectors before use. Looking for excessive or unusual wear.
- If a connector fails a visual inspection it should be immediately given to the facilitator and retired from the challenge course use.
- Check the moving parts for proper operation, the gate should open smoothly and easily.

**Belay Devices:**

- All belay devices should be properly stored in a container in the shed upon completion.
- Belay Hardware: Kliensaver, Sheer reduction device, K1 belay pulleys. The Belay hardware should be visually inspected before each use. The belay hardware will be inspected at least twice a year by one of the qualified facilitators.

**Ladders & Other Access Equipment:**

- Ladders need to be securely stored in the shed upon completion of use.
- Visually inspect ladder for defects.

**8. Element Structure:**

- Visual inspections of course equipment will take place at each use, looking for any imperfections in the wood that could cause splinters, cuts, etc. Sanding will take place if any piece of wood is found unsafe.

**9. Ropes Use Log:**

- Facilitators need to check ropes use log prior to taking out any ropes to ensure that they

are being rotated equally. Facilitator will sign out each rope they use on the log posted in the shed.

- Any time a rope is used, the facilitator upon return of rope must fill out the number of min/hours each rope was used on the Ropes Use Log in the shed.
- Ropes Use logs will be tallied at the end of the school year to determine the use of each rope throughout the year.

## Part Two: Risk Management

### Emergency Action Plan:

Type of Injury or Incident	Response
Minor Injury to workshop participant	Provide appropriate first aid Manage group follow-up Complete incident report
Moderate injury to workshop participant requiring medical attention	Complete first aid assessment Seek medical attention for participant with the school nurse. Manage group follow-up Complete accident report Contact appropriate staff
Serious injury to workshop or program participant	Complete first aid assessment Call 911 Manage group follow-up Complete accident report Conduct appropriate staff

- Cell phones need to be brought out to the course each class.
- First Aid kit will remain in the shed at all times and checked/restocked as needed.
- Rescue backpack should be brought out and placed near the element you are using.

## Part Three: Element Operation

### 1. Low Elements:

- All Aboard: See page 58 in the GCCO
- Bosun's Chair: See page 60 in the GCCO

Setup: Setup for this element requires attaching each individual chair to the swaged cable eyes using a rapid link. When not in use these should be taken down and returned to the shed.

- Islands: See page 65 in the GCCO
- Mohawk Walk: See page 67 in the GCCO  
Setup for Mohawk Walk requires attaching and tightening of turnbuckles to the poles/cables at the beginning and end of element use. These should be tightened so there is no slack in the cable. Caution should be used when tightening turnbuckle so as to not pinch fingers while turning. Guide ropes are coiled and tied at least 12 feet off the ground if using these ropes setup requires lowering them. Upon completion of element, ropes must be tied back up above 12 feet when not in use. Upon completion unscrew turnbuckles and return them to shed. Wrap the remaining cable around the pole so it is safely out of the way.
- Multi-swing: See page 69 in the GCCO
- Spiderweb: See page 72 in the GCCO Setup:  
Setup for the Spider web requires stretching the web and clipping the 6 side carabiners to each of the 2 poles. Once web is hung securely bungee cords can be adjusted to change the size of each hole based on the group's needs. Once web is hung securely bungee cords can be adjusted to change the size of each hole based on the group needs.
- Team Triangle: See page 76 in the GCCO Setup:  
Setup for the Team Triangle requires placing the triangle platform in the center of the element.
- Swinging Tires: See page 78 in the GCCO Setup:  
Setup for this element requires attaching each individual tire to the swaged cable eyes using a rapid link. When not in use these should be taken down and returned to the shed.
- TP Shuffle: See page 79 in the GCCO
- Trust Fall: See page 81 in the GCCO  
Trust falls will take place off of the school bleachers next to the soccer fields. Falls will take place from a height of 3-5 feet maximum.
- Free Standing Wall: See page 85 in the GCCO  
Ropes on the back side of the wall are not to be wrapped around body and used as harnesses.  
They are to be support ropes that should be held in hands only to assist other climbers. Participants are not allowed to jump off the back platform of the wall they must climb down the ladder safely.
- Whale Watch/Moby Deck: See page 87 in the GCCO  
Use care when taking out the blocks by keeping hands and feet free from under the platform.
- Wild Woosey: See page 88 in the GCCO  
Setup: Attach and properly tighten turnbuckles at the beginning and end of element use. These should be tightened so there is no slack in the cable. Caution should be used when tightening turnbuckle as to not pinch fingers while turning. Upon completion unscrew

turnbuckles and return them to shed. Wrap the remaining cable around the pole so it is safely out of the way.

## 2. **High Elements**

### **High Ropes Course Set-up Procedure:**

- Tie one end of p-cord to an anchor before hauling up belay rope. The belay rope with the p-cord loop end should be tied to the climber's side of the SRD so when hauled it ends up on the belay side. When hauling belay rope conduct a visual and tactile inspection of the climbing rope. Once belay rope is in place tie the two ends together or to a pole off the ground to ensure that the rope won't slip out and leave the SRD stranded, until knots are ready to be tied. P-cord needs to be gathered and placed next to the pole that it is tied off to, so it is out of the way of the belay teams.
- Static Ropes (black) are only used for the Swing Shot and Flying Squirrel, Dynamic Ropes (red or purple) are used for all other climbing elements.
- It is suggested that the Dangle Due and Vertical Playpen use a tie in knot for the climber. The tie in knot used in these two elements is the Figure 8 follow through.
- All other high elements will be instructor preference for the climber's knot.
- If a tie in knot is the preferred choice, it will be a Figure 8 Follow Through.
- All knots (tie-in or clip-in) will always be backed up with a double overhand knot.
- Climbing Tower Access Boards need to be placed securely in the slots on the climbing wall if they are being used.

### **High Ropes Course Take Down:**

- Check to make sure P-cord is attached to an anchor.
- Tie free end of P-cord to the p-cord loop on the belay rope using single overhand knots. Pull belay rope until p-cord runs through the SRD, keeping clear of the rope as it comes down. Detach belay rope and gather both ends of P-cord and tie them together.
- Tie P-cord at least 12 feet high on the pole so it is out of reach when element is closed. Coil the belay rope using the mountaineer's coil and hang it up in the shed.
- If rope is wet bring into school to uncoil and dry before using again.
- Fill out rope use log when done.
- Climbing Tower access boards need to be carefully taken out of the slots and securely chained together and put away.

## 3. **Belay Team Setup:**

- Instructor will use their preference for one of the following 3 belay systems:

### **Instructor Belay:**

- ABC ARC device will be used by the instructor clipped in with a Screw Gate Locking Carabiner.

- Instructor may choose to have additional backup belayer/anchors if needed.

### **Team Belay:**

See page 111 in GCCO.

- This belay will use a minimum of 3 people with the option to add backup anchors and rope tenders as need.
- The team belay will use the ABC ARC device clipped in with a Screw Gate Locking Carabiner.
- The first person acts as both the anchor for the belay device and as the “feeling or guide hand” pulling in the slack from the climber. The second person acts as the primary belay and brake hand and pulls the rope through the belay device, which is attached to the first person, and finally the third person has responsibility to be the backup belayer to the primary belayer.

### **Australian Belay:**

- See page 110 in GCCO.
- The belay team needs to be twice the weight of the climber preferably using 3 belayers. Additional participants could be used as backup anchors if needed.
- The Australian belay will use a triple figure 8 with a backup double overhand knot. Belayers will be clipped in using a Screw Gate Locking Carabiner.

### **Flying Squirrel/Swing Shot Haul Team Belay:**

- See page 143 in GCCO. This team needs to be a minimum of 8 people hauling the participant. A double figure 8 loop will be used to clip in two members of the haul team with a screw gate locking carabiner.
- The remaining haulers will alternate sides of the rope and hold on with both hands securely to pull when ready.

## **4. Climbing Signals:**

- Safety Checks for belayer and climber includes the following checks:
  - Harness: See page 94 in GCCO. Harness fits securely, straps are double backed, and no red is showing on buckle. Chest harness needs to be snug, so it doesn't slide down off the shoulder.
  - Helmet: See page 98 in GCCO. Helmet fits properly and securely
  - Hardware: See page 96 in GCCO. Make sure Primary and backup knots and secure, check that carabiner is secure by doing a squeeze check Prior to climbing the climber must use the following signals: see page 108 in GCCO
- Climber- “On Belay” Belay- “Belay on” Climber- “Climbing” Belay- “Climb away”
- A spotter for the ladder should be used when climber starts climb. Once climber is off the ladder safely the spotter should remove the ladder and place it in a safe location on the ground.
- Constant communication should occur between climber and belay team throughout the

climb.

- When climber is ready to come down, they need to communicate to their belay team they are ready, so they can prepare for lowering. Once belay team is ready to lower, they should communicate to the climber to descend.

## **5. High Elements: Belay Operating Procedures**

### **Traverse elements:**

#### **General protocols:**

- At the start of the traversing element, the belayer should be positioned slightly beyond the starting pole
- As the climber moves the belayer should move with the climber
- The belayer should stand approximately 20 feet from the element.
- Before lowering the belayer provides tension to the climber's rope. The climber leans back with feet remaining on element and the belayer will slowly let out the rope to lower.

#### **Specific Protocols:**

- Burma Bridge See page 134 in GCCO
- Catwalk See page 134 in GCCO
- Islands in the Sky See page 135 in GCCO
- Multi-vine Traverse See page 136 in GCCO
- Tension Traverse See page 157 in GCCO

#### **Other High Elements:**

- Dangle Duo See page 141 in GCCO
- Vertical Playpen See page 158 in GCCO
- Climbing Tower See page 140 in GCCO
- Rappelling See page 151 in GCCO
- Quadrophenia See page 150 in GCCO
- Flying squirrel See page 143 in GCCO
- Swing Shot See page 154 in GCCO

## **Part Four: Appendix**

### **Program Documents:**

- **Medical Information/Release of Liability/Student Waiver Form**

Any participant that is not enrolled in a Physical Education Class in ANWSD must fill out a Medical Information/Release of Liability Form before using the course.

Facilitators should review the medical forms before anyone uses the course. If a facilitator finds information that may raise questions about the safety of the participant, the facilitator will discuss the risks and options with this participant before using the course.

- **Accident/Incident Tracking Form:**

Any time there is an incident on the course this form must be filled out and reviewed by the



ANWSD Challenge Course Team.

- **Ropes Use Log:**

Facilitators need to check ropes use log prior to taking out any ropes to ensure that they are being rotated equally. Facilitator will sign out each rope they use on the log posted in the shed. Any time a rope is used, the facilitator upon return of rope, must fill out the number of min/hours each rope was used on the Ropes Use Log in the shed. Ropes Use logs will be tallied at the end of the school to determine the use of each rope throughout the year.

**Approved High Ropes Course Facilitators 2018-2019**

Ed Cook — VUHS Assistant Principal

Sarah Cook — VUHS PE Teacher

Jay Stetzel – VUHS Director of School Counseling & Programs

Robyn Newton VUES PE teacher.

**Approved Low Ropes Course Facilitators 2018-2019**

Ed Cook — VUHS Assistant Principal

Sarah Cook — VUHS PE Teacher

Jay Stetzel – VUHS Director of School Counseling & Programs

Robyn Newton—VUES PE Teacher

Annie Wilson — FCS PE Teacher

Course Review- 8/27/18