



# TOPEC

TARANAKI OUTDOOR PURSUITS & EDUCATION CENTRE

# Organisers Manual



# Taranaki Outdoor Pursuits & Education Centre

*Who are we?*



TOPEC is a Charitable Trust and a Private Training Establishment (PTE).

The Trust is administered by a Board of Trustees in which members are drawn from representatives of the schools who use TOPEC and individuals co-opted for their skill or interest area.

TOPEC is an education provider with a Scaffolded Learning Pathway from primary, through secondary and further to tertiary-level training.

Teach safety, risk and self-management strategies that empower participants to enjoy and recreate in the outdoors.

Promote personal growth and group develop immersed in the TOPEC Kaupapa; Manaakitanga, Whanangatanga and Kaitiakitanga.



**TOPEC**  
TARANAKI OUTDOOR PURSUITS & EDUCATION CENTRE

## **Vision**

Inspire learning, growth and potential

## **Mission**

To create positive relationships, community and personal change, through experiential learning, adventure and challenge



# TOPEC Kaupapa

- **Manaakitanga** – behaviour that acknowledges the mana of others as having equal or greater importance than one’s own.
- **Whanaungatanga** – the ‘glue’ that connects people to each other, shared experience, values, a sense of belonging, strengthen each member of the group.
- **Kaitiakitanga** – the protection and preservation of the gifts of our ancestors for future generations, or guardianship of the environment.

## TOPEC’s Kaupapa is embedded in all learning programmes

The range of activities offered will immerse participants in a variety of new situations, activities and environments. Challenges, working alongside our passionate, experienced staff in the outdoors will promote personal and social growth all while learning outdoor skills, enhancing a sense of belonging, self-confidence, and physical and mental wellbeing. Our encouraging and supporting environment allows participants to grow and try new things, working as a team and individual.

Activities are also run on a multi-level basis. Participants remain challenged and can achieve a successful outcome irrespective of physical ability.

TOPEC uses the natural settings of the bush, rivers, lakes, sea and mountains to provide these challenges.



**TOPEC kaupapa**

**Manaakitanga:**  
generosity - honouring, caring and giving mana to people thus maintaining your own.  
*Mā iāu rourou, mā taku rourou, ka oia ai te iwi*  
With your contribution and my contribution, the people will thrive.

- exhibit the capacity and natural inclination to respond, nurture, and care for others.
- have integrity and mana;
- have a sense of occasion; be welcoming; demonstrate hospitality.
- show generosity of spirit; be giving and understand the importance of and demonstrate reciprocity.
- be strong in tautoko qualities (support; value that one person's success is the success of the group).

**Whanaungatanga:**  
family values - relationships  
*Mā te tuakana ka tāhika te tīnira; mā te tīnira; ka tāhika te tuakana*  
By the elder's actions the younger will find the right path.  
The reverse is also true; the younger keeps the older on the straight path, because of the responsibility the older one bears.

- form, strengthen & maintain bonds with peers;
- value and promote loyalty and inclusiveness;
- be a role model, team player, and connect well with others;
- demonstrate an awareness of relationships and positions;
- be aware of their responsibility, especially in relationship to others;
- be strong in tautoko (support; value that one person's success is the success of the group).

**Kaitiakitanga:**  
care taker / guardianship of knowledge, environment and resources.  
*Ōi te kōwhiri, ōi te mana, ōi te whenua*  
Guard the permanence of language, mana, and land.

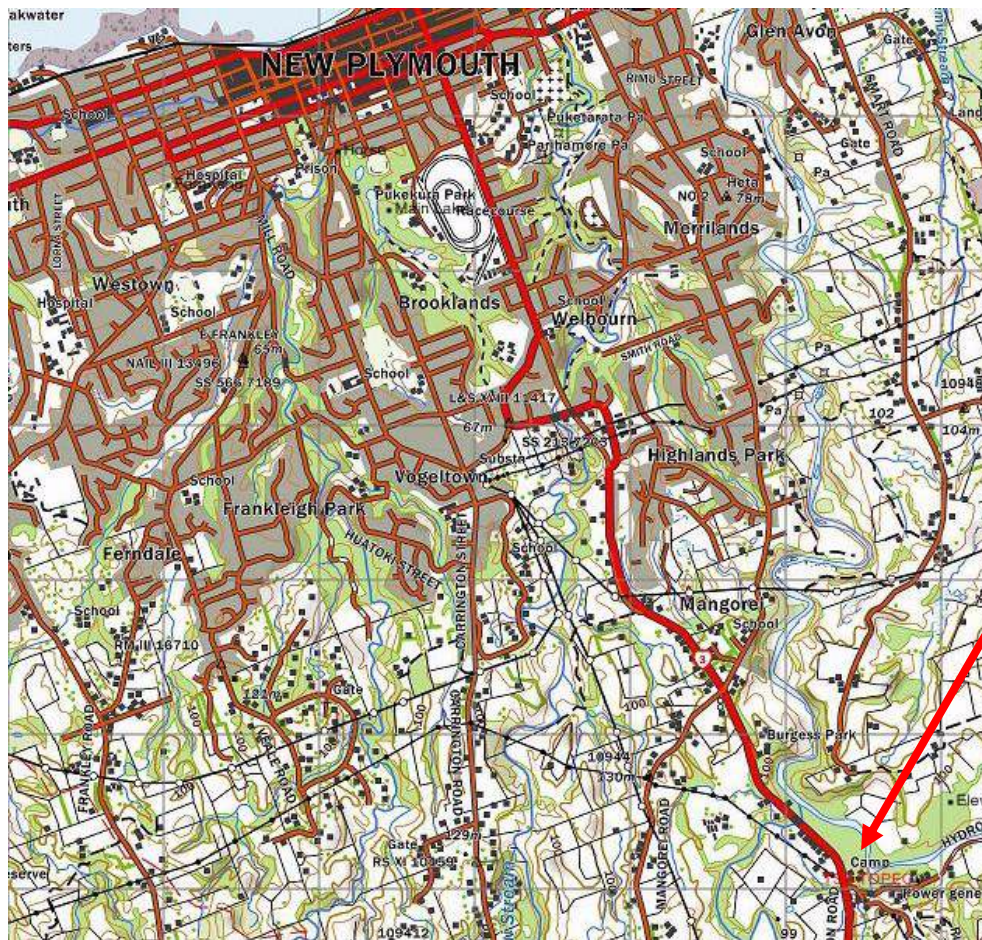
- a very strong awareness of global environmental issues and responsibility;
- recognises that human welfare and care for the environment are inextricably linked;
- is perceptive – aware of the need to nurture and maintain knowledge, environment & resources for the short term or long term future;
- demonstrates that need comes before self;
- a gifted storyteller; have an excellent memory, knowledge of and pride in linking whakapapa, hui, geography.

# General Information

TOPEC is situated on the banks of the Waiwhakaiho River near the Mangorei Power Station and the Meeting of the Waters scenic reserve.

Although only 8km from the centre of New Plymouth, the picturesque setting and distance from main roads give it an atmosphere of isolation and tranquillity.

On site or within easy travelling distance are a variety of suitable environments for outdoor activities. Taranaki Maunga surrounding Ngahere (bush), Awa (rivers) and Tangaroa (sea) are ideal locations for rock climbing, bush walking and water pursuits.



**TOPEC**  
11 Hydro Road  
Off Junction Road  
New Plymouth

# Accommodation/Facilities

There are cabins onsite which accommodate six to eight participants.

All food is provided for residential camps (unless otherwise organised). The participants will be involved in the cooking and cleaning duties during the week.

There are two separate ablution blocks, there is also a separate shower toilet/shower room which is wheelchair accessible.

## *Cabins*



## *Main Lodge*

The Main Lodge contains a lounge, dining area and commercial kitchen for up to 40 people. A large log fire provides winter warmth. There is also access to a TV, whiteboard, projector screen and broadband connection is available on request.



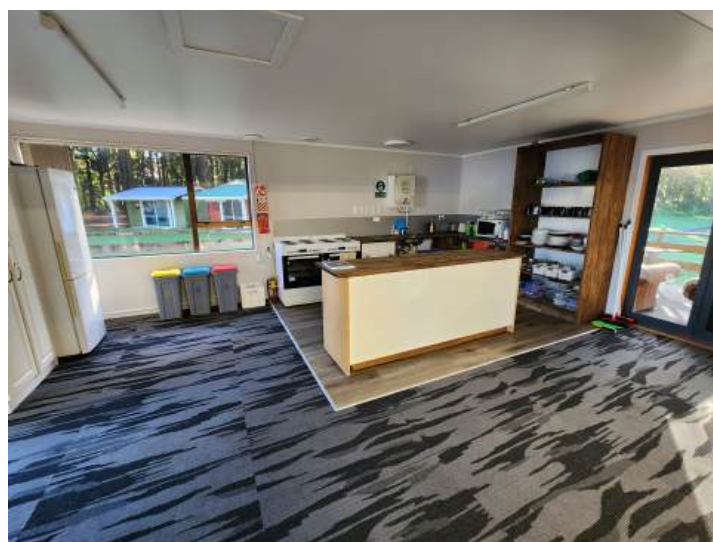
## *Bryce Jourdain Whare*



A modern learning environment which can double as a cabin when required.

## *Davidson Lodge*

The Davidson Lodge is a smaller version of the main lodge with kitchen facilities for up to 30 it has a divider to shut off the kitchen, so a classroom can be used for presentations and classroom-based activities. This is an ideal facility for smaller groups with a covered deck on the back for groups to sit outside under shelter.



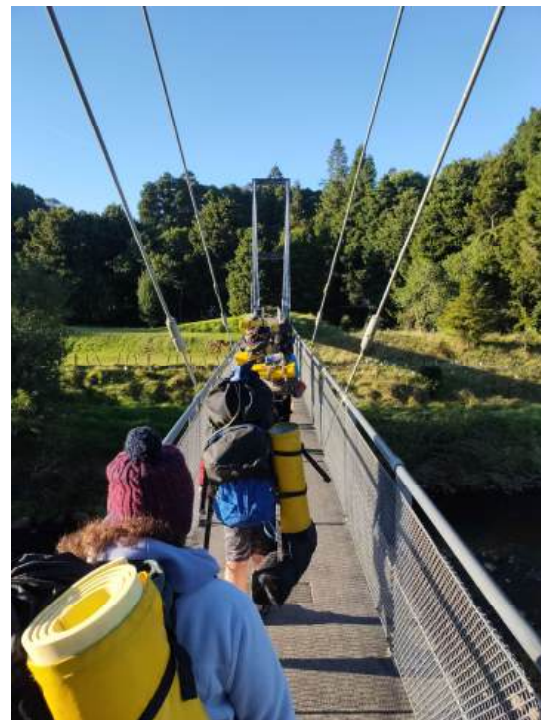
## *Eco Lodge*

Constructed from sustainable, reclaimed, local materials, the Eco lodge is a high spec, solar powered accommodation option at TOPEC. The spacious living/meeting area is complemented with leather couches, gas fire, digital TV, data projector, blue ray player and surround sound. Teachers often get to stay here during camps. It sleeps up to 10 people, with four bunk rooms upstairs and one bunk room downstairs.



# Other Facilities onsite include:

- 9m High Artificial Climbing Tower/Abseil
- High Ropes Course
- Low Ropes Course
- Bridge to DOC reserve – Mud Run
- Swimming Hole – Waiwhakaiho



# TOPEC Staff/Instructors Roles & Responsibilities

Participants are always supervised by either a TOPEC staff member or a visiting group/school adult.

TOPEC staff are responsible for students during programmed activities, generally from 9:00am to 4:00pm, unless otherwise arranged. Outside of these times, during an overnight stay at TOPEC Camp, the responsibility of the students is handed back to school staff who are the primary duty of care and provide a suitable level of supervision under their PCBU/School policies. The expectation to this is on overnight trips or longer trips away from TOPEC when TOPEC staff are responsible for student's welfare and safety.

Handover of the responsibility back to school staff, will always be a conscious process. Each part will make it clear to students and accompanying adults/teachers when they are assuming responsibility and when they are passing responsibility on.

For residential groups, generally one instructor will be responsible for managing a group of 10 participants throughout the week. Activities can then be modified to suit individual needs. Group size may vary dependant on the specific activity Standard Operation Procedure (SOP).

No two weeks are the same and activities will be selected by individual Instructors to meet the needs of individual groups, weather, and environmental conditions.



# Safety

## TOPEC and Adventure Mark (Safety Accreditation)

TOPEC is audited by Adventure Mark to ensure that our operation meets national industry requirements. This audit also looks at risk management, staff competency, training, accident reporting and equipment.



The Adventure Mark symbol is a New Zealand registered trademark and provides a clear and public demonstration that the operations or services awarded a certificate have successfully demonstrated their conformance with the Safety Audit Standard for Adventure Activities. If you require more information on our safety systems, please do not hesitate to contact the Director and we are happy to talk to you and show you the relevant Safety Operations Procedures, participant safety is our primary focus. Activity ratios will vary, dependent on the activity and environmental factors. Individual Standard Operating procedures will specify ratios and other specific safety policies.



# Pre-Course Preparation



# Course preparation

*Required by the school*

- The dates for TOPEC camps are pre-set so there should be adequate time for preparation.
- You will receive a contract for services that we require you to get signed by the appropriate staff member at your school and return to TOPEC. You will also receive a copy of the TOPEC Health profile and risk disclosure form, gear list and any other relevant information you require, depending on the type of programme you have requested.
- Arrange pre-camp meetings at school to give out relevant information and updates. All forms are also available as downloads from the TOPEC website [www.topec.co.nz](http://www.topec.co.nz)
- Ensure both participants and parents receive adequate information.
- The payment and collection of course fees must be arranged.
- **TOPEC Health Profile and Risk disclosure** full list of participants names and summary sheet is required on arrival. Your instructors will check the forms and ensure everything is signed and acknowledged on arrival. It is a good idea to double check forms are all completed before coming to TOPEC. If a participant does not have a signed form by a parent or caregiver, then they cannot participate.
- Issue clothing and equipment lists. Encourage participants not to purchase expensive items. TOPEC has a range of such equipment for participants use. (Refer to gear requirement sheet)
- Arrange Staffing. There must be a minimum of one teacher/coordinator contactable during the day and two teachers (or adults) after 4:00pm. Teachers are welcome to join in activities or remain in base at TOPEC during the day.
- A packed lunch will be needed for day one.
- Participants to arrive from 9:00a.m. to 10:00a.m. on the first day and leave by 1:30p.m. at the end of the course, unless otherwise arranged.
- The participants should be divided into groups of ten prior to the course, unless otherwise discussed, this will be dependent on the activities you are choosing to do. A mix of ability and gender is recommended (where appropriate). An instructor will be assigned to the group on arrival.
- It is advisable to have one or two participants on standby in case of late injury or illness, to maintain course numbers.
- Cabins will be allocated by TOPEC staff on arrival. You may also want to have cabin groups sorted before arriving at TOPEC, see the map provided in this manual to guide you on numbers in each cabin.

# Medical Health Profile & Risk Disclosure

- TOPEC has now implemented the use of Google Forms for our Medical Profile and Risk Disclosure. The parents/caregivers of the students are required to complete this prior to the students arrival to TOPEC
- Access to the Medical Profile and Risk Disclosure form is given to the teacher in charge of the camps organization via a collaboration link sent on an email.
- If the online medical form is inaccessible to any students and their families, a physical copy of the form can be requested from the TOPEC administrator. Because the questions and disclosures in the forms may be revised, we ask that old physical versions of the TOPEC medical form be discarded.
- Please advise TOPEC of any special needs or dietary requirements seven days prior to arriving. Participants with specialised dietary needs may be required to bring this food.
- Please provide a summary sheet, either hard copy or Google Docs on arrival stating:
  - Student name
  - Injuries/Conditions
  - Food allergies
  - Medication
  - Swimming ability
  - Emergency contacts x 2

***The Consent statement below is part of the health profile, this must be read and signed by a parent/caregiver***

## **Parental Consent / Individual Consent**

- I agree to my child / myself taking part in the Education outside the Classroom (EOTC) / Adventure events while at TOPEC.
- The activities depending on the season may include activities such as kayaking, river bugging, adventure-based learning, white water rafting, river safety, kayaking, caving, ropes course, orienteering, boogie boarding, abseiling, bridge swing, rock climbing, tramping, fixed structure activities, snow caving, basic alpine skills, confidence course, tramping and camping. These activities may make use of the coasts, rivers, lakes, harbours, caves and the bush/ngahere of Taranaki and NZ
- Participation in all activities at TOPEC is voluntary – this is referred to by TOPEC as ***Challenge by Choice***. The activities listed above contain some elements of risk which cannot be completely eliminated. The risk is countered by carefully structured and sequenced activities and by supervision of activities with trained instructors

- I agree to their / my participation in the activities described. I acknowledge the need for them / me to behave responsibly.

## **Acknowledgment of Risk**

- I have read the above information and I understand that there are risks associated with involvement in the Outdoor Activities and that these risks cannot be eliminated completely. Hazards exist in these activities that may result in serious injury or even death
- I understand that TOPEC will ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of participants, workers, and volunteers.
- I understand that I / my child will be involved in the explanation, learning and demonstration of safety procedures associated with an activity.
- It is acknowledged that it is important for me/my child to always follow the instructions and directions given by TOPEC members and officers. We understand that TOPEC will take all reasonable and practicable precautions to ensure my/ my child's safety but if I/my child does not follow the instructions and directions given by TOPEC members and officers then this could result in serious harm or injury which TOPEC has been unable to reasonably prevent.
- I will ensure that my child / I follow these procedures. I / my child will be responsible for any actions or inaction if these procedures are not followed
- I know that I can ask any questions of TOPEC about the activities I / my child will be involved in, to gain a better understanding of the risks involved.
- I recognise that participation in such activities is voluntary and not mandatory. My child/I understand that I / they may withdraw from the activity if I / they feel at risk. This must be done in consultation with the person in charge and where the safety of self or others is not compromised
- I understand that TOPEC does not accept responsibility for loss or damage to personal property and that it is my responsibility to check my own insurance policy
- I understand that if at any time during the programme / activity - I / my child is under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or act in a way that endangers the safety of self or others, TOPEC has the right to stop further participation the programme / activity and with no right for refund of the fee.

**To be read and signed by adult participant or parent / caregiver of child participant.**

Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / 20

## **Accommodation**

School Staff are accommodated in the Eco Lodge or Alan Kirk Cabin.

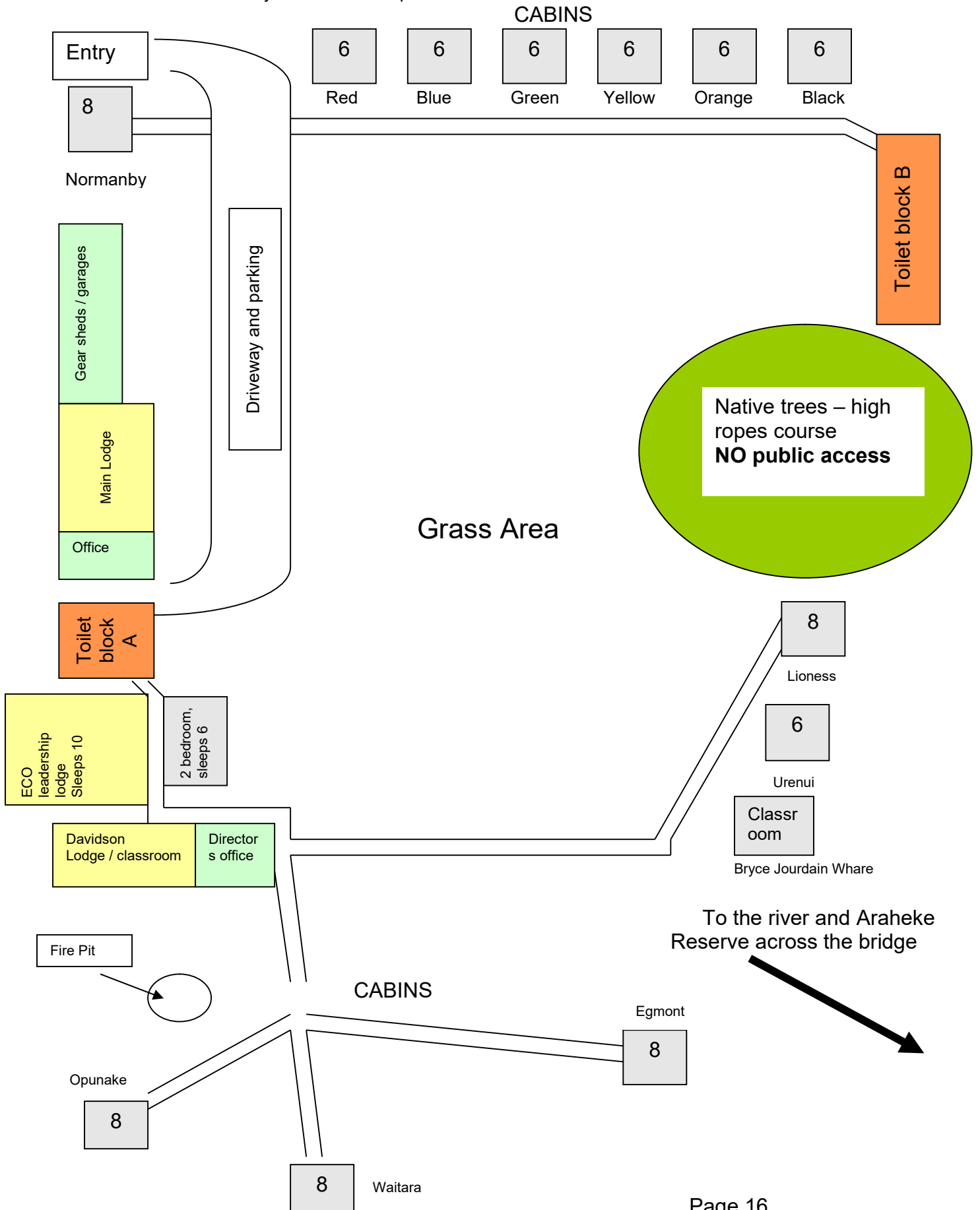
Participants cabins are allocated on arrival by TOPEC instructors.

Please see map below for bed allocation for cabins.



# TOPEC Camp layout

\*Number in box is how many each cabin sleeps.



# Staffing

- At least one school staff member must be available from 8:20a.m. until 4:00p.m. to assist with logistics, transport. or be on call in case of emergency.
- Two school staff (or approved adults) must be on site from 4:00p.m. until 9:00a.m. the following morning.
- In case of emergency, a school staff member is to be on call each day and on the night of the overnight.
- A school staff member must be present on the last morning from 10:30a.m. to assist with clean up and organising departure.

# Participants Gear/Clothing

See the TOPEC website for downloadable gear lists [www.topec.co.nz](http://www.topec.co.nz)

TOPEC staff will ensure that all participants are adequately clothed for each activity.

When taking part in outdoor activities participant clothing and equipment needs to be adequate in quality and sufficient quantity. Warm clothing is an important aspect, in not only surviving the outdoors, but in enjoying it whilst participating.

Weather plays a big part by determining the type of activity that can or cannot be scheduled. Inappropriate gear / clothing for the occasion puts an even greater limitation on the extent and choice of activities.

*“No such thing as poor weather; only poor clothing“*  
Sir Ranulph Fiennes

Gear does not need to be fashionable – practicality and warmth are the two most desirable features. Wool, polypropylene or thermals are particularly useful.

TOPEC has a limited amount of gear that can be provided for students if necessary eg. fleeces, rain jackets, thermal tops, beanies, shoes and backpacks.

**Make sure that participants are prepared to get wet every day!**



# Roles and Responsibilities

**TOPEC** is not responsible for the participants travelling to and from school and during the evening when TOPEC Staff are off duty.

**TOPEC Staff** take full responsibility for the participants while on activities, from 9:00a.m. to 4:00p.m.

Accompanying staff are most welcome to participate in activities but count within our staffing ratios. Also, it is recognised that they have a major commitment in supervising participants throughout the evening and night and some time out is essential.

- For continuity it is desirable to have one staff member available for at least the first 3 days.
- School staff attend the morning briefing and end of course de-brief.
- A suitable night time programme is advisable.

Visiting adults/staff may wish to accompany groups on activities, which is encouraged and will allow shared experiences to be taken away.

Any adult/staff that participate in activities must adhere to the directions of the instructors and will also be required to complete a Health Profile & Risk Disclosure.

Accompanying staff are not expected to go out on overnight camp though, a designated staff member must be available and carry a cell phone in case of emergency.

A TOPEC camp is an opportunity to interact with participants in a totally new environment. The working relationships formed will have very positive carry over on return to the classroom.



# How does a weekly programme run?



# Visiting Staff

- On arrival, visiting school staff are to meet with TOPEC staff.
- Review the permission slips and medical conditions with TOPEC Instructors.
- Students will be briefed – this good for new teachers to be a part of.
- Join in activities, assist with logistics or remain available via cell phone in case of emergencies.
- Two visiting staff/leaders (or adults) to be available from 4.00pm.
- Manage evening meal and breakfast preparation to become familiar with the meal procedures.
- Manage participants meal preparation for the following days.
- Evening activities should be arranged, except when the participants are out on an overnight camp.
- Organise lights out for an appropriate time and monitor participants behaviour.
- Carry cell-phone as an emergency contact whenever off site and while participants are on overnight camp.
- Be available from 10:30a.m. on the last day to assist with clean up and departure (between 1:00p.m. and 1:30p.m)
- Attend the final course de-brief with instructors.



# Process

Any activity will be confirmed each day following a Staff Briefing at 8:20am where a number of factors will be considered – the visiting teacher is required to be present during these briefings. These factors include but are not limited to:

- Weather forecast
- Recent weather
- Rainfall
- Free air freezing level
- Wind
- Tides
- Swell
- Group physical ability
- Group emotional ability
- Group resilience
- Medical conditions / Students at risk
- Fatigue of group
- Staffing ability, competency and availability

Participants will be informed of activities, environmental factors, hazards and the nature of activities disclosed at the start of each day. The information of the day's activities can be relayed to parents as required by the visiting group leader.

## Residential Camps for Primary, Intermediate and Secondary Schools

- Building personal skills in the outdoors, working as a team, Manaakitanga,
- Whanaungatanga and learning how to be guardians of our land – Kaitiakitanga.
- Outdoor pursuit skills
- Risk management
- Self-management
- *Leave No Trace*/Kaitiakitanga
- Manaakitanga/respect and responsibility for self and others



# Possible Activities

Activities may include but are not limited to:

- White-water rafting
- Adventure Based Learning
- Kayaking
- River bugging
- Raft building
- High ropes / low ropes
- Outdoor climbing wall
- Abseiling
- Rogaine, orienteering
- Bush walking
- Bush survival skills
- Camping
- Body boarding, kayak surfing
- Sea kayaking
- Overnight / multi-night camps
- Caving
- Mud Run
- Team building



Please note that activities may be seasonal and not available all year round.



# A Typical Day

*Example of daily schedule*

- 7:00a.m.** Duty group reports to the kitchen to cook breakfast
- 7:45a.m.** Ring the bell to call participants to breakfast
- 8:00a.m.** Serve breakfast when all participants are present
- 8:20a.m.** Teacher attends *Toolbox* briefing in administration office
- 8:30a.m.** Individuals make their own lunches (sandwiches). Duties and clean up
- 9:00a.m.** Meet with Instructors and arrange the days activities.

*Lunch is usually in the field, but groups often return to TOPEC at lunchtime to change activities.*

- 4:00p.m. – 4:30p.m.** End of daily activities. Hand over to School staff
- 5:00p.m.** Duty group to the kitchen to cook the evening meal
- 6:30p.m.** Evening meal is served
- 7:30p.m.** Evening activity
- 10:00p.m.** Participants into cabins for evening



# Evening Activities

It is important to arrange some formal programme in the evenings. Too long a period of free time can lead to problems. There are ideas and equipment on site, but some pre-planning is recommended.

## Outdoor Activities

- Campfire. Wood can be collected from around camp. This is a good activity for the last evening onsite.
- Spotlight
- Nightline
- Sports: volleyball, cricket, football.
- Swimming
- Tug of War
- Eeling
- Initiative Games

## Indoor Activities

- Games – balloon games are always popular.
- Skits and concerts
- Board and card games
- DVD movie night
- Ping pong table available
- Treasure Hunts
- Invitation Speakers



# Onsite rules and expectations

- The TOPEC programme is part of any visiting School's curriculum, therefore, School rules apply at all times. The students will have an introductory briefing on arrival which will include Safety, a typical day, expectations as well as our TOPEC Kaupapa.
- Individuals are not to leave the TOPEC site without the permission of the TOPEC staff or Visiting School staff. The boundary is the surrounding fence.
- Ensure all gates are left closed.
- Graffiti and broken windows to be paid for by the offender. Take care with physical games and balls near windows.
- The fire siren is used for all emergencies. Assemble by the 'Bouldering Wall'. Call the on-duty staff member if there is an emergency or you need assistance, please see numbers in the back of the Manual
- First Aid. Treat all injuries, even minor ones as soon as possible.
- Swimming must be undertaken in a group and with a TOPEC instructor. Should swimming occur outside the instructor hours, it is the full responsibility of the visiting schools to manage actively supervise students.
- Participants are not allowed visitors other than parents or legal guardians except with permission of the Director or School Staff.
- No outdoor equipment is to be used without Instructor supervision.
- Cell phones/electronic devices **are discouraged** from being brought to TOPEC. However, if on-site they are to be stored away in a locked office.
- Participants are not allowed to change activity groups except on the permission of the school staff/Instructors.
- No alcohol, cigarettes, vapes, drugs or other items that would not be permitted at a School e.g. pocketknife, lighters, etc.
- Groups will be expected to clean the facilities prior to departure.



# Additional Information

## Kitchen

- *Home baking* - Student home baking can be placed in the first pantry and is used for supper and afternoon/morning tea.
- *Leftovers* - Any leftover food can be reused for a following meal. If there is bulk food leftover this will be delivered to 'On the House' on Thursday, a local charity we support.
- *Lunches* - Students must make their own lunches each morning and store in their own lunch box. These are then placed in the group containers found in the kitchen.
- *Tea towels* – Please put these in the dirty tea towel bucket each morning.
- *Kitchen* – Must be cleaned and tidy before morning activities start. Teacher supervision is required for this. Empty rubbish bins daily, clean all dishes, sweep floors, and wipe all surfaces.
- *Pantry code* – Please use C38X to get into the pantry.

## Toilets

- *Cleaning* - It is the responsibility of the school to keep these clean and tidy throughout the week. It is advised that a teacher checks them each morning. If there are any issues; such as toilets blocked etc., please advise a staff member.
- *Supplies* – Spare toilet rolls can be found in the first cleaning cupboard. This will need to be accessed by a TOPEC staff member. Additional cleaning supplies can be found in the cupboard next to the washing machine.

## Clothing

- *Drying* – There are two clothes racks inside lodge by fire and there are clothes lines in front of each cabin. Please talk to staff before using the dryer and washing machine.
- *Clothing* – TOPEC does have extra clothing for students should they require any. Please discuss further with a staff member.

## Duties

- Feel free to use these rosters found in the main lodge.

## Rubbish, Recycling & Food scraps

- Ensure all kitchen bins are emptied daily into the large bins around camp.
- All large bins need to be emptied regularly. The skip is located in the back staff carpark, access through walkway that runs between the lodge and gear sheds.
- Food scraps are collected weekly on a Friday. Please leave these bins with the lids on, at the back of the main kitchen.

# First Aid & Emergencies

- Participants are briefed at the start of each course on the key safety equipment carried on each activity, how to use them and when to use them. A prompt card is also carried to remind participants.
- A small First Aid Kit is stored in the kitchen, Eco Lodge & Davidson Lodge. First Aid supplies are in the cabinet in the Office.
- There is a list of important phone numbers in the Emergency Folder located in the Administration office.
- Parents and/or caregiver phone numbers are on permission/medical forms in the Office and carried in the field by Teacher/Instructors
- Copies of all master participant information and medical forms are held in the Office.
- Do not hesitate to call for Ambulance – Fire – Police if it is considered prudent.
- The main Fire Bell can be activated from beside the main doors in the lounge. Fire hoses are located under the Main Lodge porch, by the Alan Kirk, Egmont and Opunake cabins. Fire extinguishers are located in the kitchen and other communal areas.
- The Emergency Assembly point is at the climbing/bouldering wall beside the ropes course.
- Instructors carry cell phones, personal location beacons and radios on all activities.
- Visiting staff / adults should carry a cell-phone and have given the number to TOPEC staff when they are off site and, in camp, at night, in case of an emergency in the field.

*Any serious accident that occurs onsite, outside of activity time (before 9:00a.m. and after 4:00p.m.) is the responsibility of Visiting Staff/Leaders. Please contact staff on duty to assist when needed, see the numbers in the back of the manual.*

*An accident/incident form will need to be completed, and in the case of serious harm, reported to Work Safe NZ as soon as possible.*

# Contact Us

TOPEC office

06 758 0448

Email

[office@topec.co.nz](mailto:office@topec.co.nz)

**Management Staff** - to be contacted if staying onsite and require assistance after contact hours

Christine 'Grover' Worsfold (Director)

[grover@topec.co.nz](mailto:grover@topec.co.nz)

Josh Kirby (Operations Manager)

[josh@topec.co.nz](mailto:josh@topec.co.nz)

Colleen Frederickson (Operations Administrator)

[colleen@topec.co.nz](mailto:colleen@topec.co.nz)