

Risk Assessment

Junior & Senior Camps 2024'

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1. Introduction:

The purpose of this risk assessment is to identify and evaluate potential risks and hazards associated with running physical activity camps for children aged 3-4 (Junior) and 5-12 (Senior). By conducting a thorough analysis of potential risks, The Underdog Games aim to proactively identify measures to mitigate or eliminate these risks, ensuring the safety and well-being of individuals involved.

This risk assessment will provide a comprehensive overview of the identified hazards, their likelihood of occurrence, and recommended control measures. It is essential to understand that risk assessment is an ongoing process that requires regular review and updates to adapt to changing circumstances and new information.

The primary goals of this risk assessment are to:

1. Identify potential hazards and risks associated with running team-based, physical activity children's camps for persons aged 3-12.
2. Assess the severity and likelihood of occurrence of each identified risk.
3. Determine appropriate control measures to reduce or eliminate the identified risks.
4. Communicate the findings and recommended control measures to stakeholders and individuals involved.
5. Implement the recommended control measures and continuously monitor their effectiveness.

This risk assessment is a vital tool for proactive risk management, promoting a safe and secure environment for all involved parties. By adhering to the recommended control measures and remaining vigilant throughout the camps, we can minimize the likelihood of accidents, injuries, and negative outcomes.

It is important for all individuals involved to actively participate in the risk assessment process, report any potential hazards or risks they observe, and adhere to the established control measures. By working together, we can effectively mitigate risks and create a safer environment for all children, parents and camp staff.

Please note that this risk assessment is not exhaustive and may require periodic review and updates as new information becomes available or circumstances change. Your feedback and suggestions are valuable in ensuring the continuous improvement of our risk management efforts.

Thank you for your commitment to safety and for your cooperation throughout this risk assessment process.

2. Risk Rating:

Risk Rating	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
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The risk rating is based on the calculated risk of a potential hazard occurring during the everyday operations at camp. Please note these calculations are made with all evidence considered but remain subjective and therefore may differ between different stakeholders.

3. Hazards / Risks + Control Measures:

i) Physical Injury:

Risk Rating	Moderate
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Reasoning for Risk Rating:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active and Dynamic Environment: The Underdog Games ‘Get Up, Get Active’ Senior Camps and ‘Little Underdogs’ Junior Camps offer a wide range of physical activities. These activities involve movement, running, jumping, throwing and sometimes contact with objects or other participants. The dynamic nature of the environment increases the likelihood of accidental falls, collisions, or other incidents that can result in physical injury. Varied Skill Levels: Participants in The Underdog Games camps may have varying levels of physical ability, coordination, and experience. Some children may be more skilled and confident in their physical abilities, while others may be beginners or less experienced. This discrepancy in skill levels can contribute to an increased risk of injury, as children may attempt activities beyond their capabilities or may not have developed adequate safety awareness. Peer Pressure and Competition: In a camp setting, children may feel pressure to perform or keep up with their peers. This can lead to a higher likelihood of engaging in riskier behaviours or attempting stunts or activities beyond their comfort zone. Peer pressure and competition can sometimes compromise judgment and increase the risk of physical injury. Outdoor and Natural Elements: The Underdog Games endeavour to run as many activities outside as possible during the camps, which can introduce additional risk factors. Uneven terrain, natural obstacles, inclement weather conditions, or exposure to environmental hazards (e.g., insects, plants) can increase the risk of accidents and injuries during physical activities. Supervision Challenges: Despite the best efforts of camp staff, maintaining constant and individualized supervision of every participant in physically active settings can be challenging. Even with adequate supervision ratios, unforeseen incidents or momentary lapses in attention can occur, increasing the risk of physical injury. Equipment and Facilities: The Underdog Games provide equipment and facilities for physical activities. While efforts are made to ensure their safety and maintenance, there is still a potential risk of equipment malfunction, improper use, or inadequate maintenance, which can lead to accidents and injuries.

Preventive Measures to Address Safety Hazard

- **Thorough Safety Briefings:** Conduct comprehensive safety briefings for all participants at the beginning of the camp. This should include explanations of the rules, guidelines, and safety protocols for each activity, emphasizing the importance of following instructions and knowing one's limitations.
- **Age-Appropriate Activities:** Tailor the activities to the age and skill level of the participants. Divide participants into groups based on their age to ensure that they are engaged in activities suitable for their physical capabilities and experience.
- **Proper Equipment and Maintenance:** Regularly inspect and maintain all equipment and facilities used in activities. Ensure that they are in good working condition and meet safety standards.
- **Trained and Adequate Staff:** Employ a sufficient number of trained staff members to supervise and monitor activities. Staff should be knowledgeable about the specific activities they oversee. A minimum of 1 staff present at each of our Junior and Senior Camps will be trained in First Aid. Maintain a staff-to-participant ratio that allows for effective supervision.
- **Safety Protocols and Emergency Procedures:** Establish clear safety protocols and emergency procedures for different activities, including communication methods, first aid response, and evacuation plans. Ensure that all staff members are familiar with these protocols and can effectively implement them if needed.
- **Appropriate Documentation:** Incidents of physical injury will prompt the completion of a 'Camp Incident Report Form' from the Camp Manager which will be shared by email with parents/guardians, ensuring they are fully made aware of the injury.
- **Environmental Risk Assessment:** Assess the outdoor environment each day, identifying and mitigating potential hazards such as uneven terrain, natural obstacles, weather conditions, and environmental hazards. Monitor weather forecasts regularly and have protocols in place to address changing weather conditions.
- **Encourage Open Communication:** Foster an environment where participants feel comfortable communicating concerns, physical limitations, or discomfort to camp staff. Encourage open dialogue to ensure that any issues or potential risks are addressed promptly.
- **Supervised Free Time:** During free time or unstructured activities, ensure that trained staff members are present and actively supervising participants to minimize the risk of unsupervised risky behaviour or accidents.
- **Ongoing Risk Assessments:** Continuously review and assess the effectiveness of preventive measures. Conduct regular inspections, gather feedback from participants and staff, and make necessary adjustments to improve safety protocols.

ii) Allergies:

Risk Rating	Low
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Reasoning for Risk Rating

- **Allergy Disclosure / Communication:** On the Online Application Form, parents/guardians are required to disclose any specific allergies/medical conditions when registering their child with The Underdog Games camp. This allows the camp to prepare sufficiently for these allergies well in advance of the camp start date.
- **Homemade Lunches:** The Underdog Games do not provide food for our Junior and Senior Camps. It is the responsibility of the individual parent/guardian to prepare a lunch for their child. As primary care givers, they are the most aware and experienced in ensuring the chosen food will not result in an allergic reaction.
- **Restricted Food Choices:** The parents/guardians are informed of certain prohibited food items well in advance of camp’s start date. Such food items are either directly linked to an allergy of another attendee, or they are food items with higher rates of allergic reaction (i.e. nuts and egg). Chewing gum is also prohibited as a potential health risk.

Preventive Measures to Address Safety Hazard
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- **Allergy Awareness / First Aid Training:** At least 1 member of staff on-site will be trained in emergency first aid training. This training should include recognizing signs of an allergic reaction, administering emergency medication (such as epinephrine auto-injectors), and seeking medical assistance when necessary.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Develop an emergency action plan specific to allergic reactions. Ensure that all staff members are familiar with the plan and their roles in responding to an allergic reaction. Clearly communicate the location of emergency medications and provide training on their proper use.
- **Strict Food Rules / Expectations:** The Underdog Games outlines strict food rules to the parents/guardians prior to the start of camp, including, but not limited to, sharing food and hand washing protocols.
- **Supervision of Lunch Breaks:** Staff are instructed to sit with their designated group to supervise our two scheduled lunch times and ensure the above food rules are followed.

iii) Inappropriate Behaviour

Risk Rating	Moderate
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Reasoning for Risk Rating

- **Age Range and Developmental Differences:** Our camps cater to a wide age range, from 3 to 12 years old. This age range encompasses different stages of physical, emotional, and social development. Younger children may not have developed certain social skills, while older children may be more assertive or experimental in their behaviour. These developmental differences can contribute to misunderstandings, conflicts, or inappropriate behaviours among participants.
- **Mixed Genders and Social Dynamics:** Summer camps that include both boys and girls may introduce additional social dynamics and challenges. Participants may exhibit behaviours influenced by societal gender norms or engage in gender-specific teasing, exclusion, or bullying.
- **Diverse Socio-economic Backgrounds:** Children attending summer camps often come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. This diversity can lead to differences in social experiences, expectations, and attitudes towards rules and norms. Inappropriate behaviours may arise from misunderstandings, differences in values or perspectives, or a lack of awareness about appropriate conduct. It is crucial to foster an inclusive and accepting environment that promotes empathy and understanding among participants.
- **Physical Activity and High Energy Levels:** The nature of summer camps with an abundance of physical activities can lead to increased excitement, high energy levels, and a sense of competitiveness among participants. This heightened energy can sometimes result in impulsive or inappropriate behaviour, such as pushing, shoving, or engaging in rough play that may exceed the boundaries of acceptable behaviour.
- **Lack of Familiarity and Socialisation Challenges:** Many of our camp participants may not know each other beforehand, which can present challenges in building social connections and adapting to the group dynamics. Some children may struggle with socialisation, feel left out, or exhibit attention-seeking behaviours to gain acceptance. These challenges can increase the likelihood of inappropriate behaviours or conflicts within the camp environment.

Preventive Measures to Address Safety Hazard

- **Behaviour Guidelines:** Establish clear behaviour guidelines and expectations for all participants. Thoroughly explain these guidelines at the very beginning of the camp.
- **Trained Camp Staff:** Majority of our camp staff have plentiful experience working with children and are therefore trained in behaviour management techniques and conflict resolution strategies.
- **Clear Procedures for Misbehaviour:** Ensure camp staff are fully aware of procedures for minor and major misbehaviours. All camp staff should follow the same process.
- **Open Communication:** Foster open communication channels among participants, staff, and parents/guardians to address any concerns or issues that may arise.
- **Appropriate Documentation:** Incidents of inappropriate behaviour will prompt the completion of a 'Camp Incident Report Form' from the Camp Manager, which will be shared by email with parents/guardians, ensuring they are fully made aware of the incident.
- **Lead by Example:** Encourage inclusive and supportive behaviour by fostering a sense of belonging and emphasizing teamwork and cooperation.

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iv) Missing Child:

Risk Rating	Very Low
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Reasoning for Risk Rating

- **Sign-in and Sign-out Procedures:** By implementing sign-in and sign-out procedures (which are led by our Camp Manager), every child is accounted for and a clear record of attendance is established, making it highly unlikely for a child to go missing unnoticed.
- **Excellent Child to Staff Ratio:** Maintaining a low child to staff ratio allows for better supervision and reduces the chances of a child wandering off unnoticed. With an adequate number of trained staff members available to monitor and interact with the children, they can closely observe and attend to each child's needs, minimizing the risk of a child going missing. Our Junior Camps have an excellent ratio of 1:5 to cater for the young nature of the participants while our Senior Camps have a ratio of 1:11.
- **Enclosed Private Grounds:** Having enclosed private grounds adds an extra layer of security and makes it more difficult for a child to leave the camp premises without authorization. Fenced or secured boundaries help prevent unauthorized entry or exit, reducing the risk of a child wandering off into unknown or potentially dangerous areas.
- **Regular Roll Calls:** Conducting regular roll calls, where all participants are accounted for at specified intervals, is an effective measure to ensure that no child is missing. Roll calls provide an opportunity to confirm the presence of all children, identify any discrepancies, and quickly address any potential issues or concerns.
- **Rule of 3 / Bathroom Procedure:** Campers will never be left alone or 1-on-1 with a staff member outside the purview of other people. Regarding the use of the bathrooms, children will be supervised at all times walking to and from the bathrooms.

Preventive Measures to Address Safety Hazard
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- **Comprehensive Registration and Consent Process:** Implement a thorough registration process that includes detailed information about the child, emergency contacts and any specific medical or behavioural needs. Ensure that parents or guardians provide consent and understand the camp's policies and procedures.
- **Strict Sign-In and Sign-Out Procedures:** Enforce strict sign-in and sign-out procedures, requiring parents or authorized individuals to collect their child, providing a clear record of attendance and authorized individuals for pick-up. At St. Dominic's College, parents are not permitted to enter the hall and children are brought out one at a time.
- **Well-Defined Camp Boundaries:** Establish clear boundaries for the camp premises, such as fenced areas or designated zones, to prevent unauthorized entry or exit. Regularly inspect and maintain the boundaries to ensure they are secure and childproof.

- **Effective Staffing and Supervision:** Maintain an appropriate child-to-staff ratio to ensure adequate supervision at all times. Train staff members on child supervision protocols, including constant awareness of each child's whereabouts and activities. Designate specific staff members responsible for monitoring entrances, exits, and the overall movement of children at pick-up and drop off. Each staff is assigned a specific cohort of children for the duration of the camp week.
- **Regular Attendance Checks:** Conduct frequent attendance checks, such as roll calls or headcounts, throughout the day. Ensure that all children are accounted for and promptly address any discrepancies or missing individuals.
- **Identification Tags or Wristbands:** Children will be provided with coloured wristbands upon arrival each day. This helps staff members identify what group each child is assigned, making it easier to organise a large group of children.
- **Communication with Parents/Guardians:** Maintain open and regular communication with parents or guardians, providing updates on camp activities and any changes in schedules or routines. Encourage parents to promptly report any concerns or changes in their child's attendance or pick-up arrangements.

v) Sunburn / Dehydration:

Risk Rating	Low
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Reasoning for Risk Rating
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sun Safety Measures: Implementing comprehensive sun safety measures significantly reduces the risk of sunburn and heat-related illnesses. The Underdog Games encourages parents/guardians to apply sun cream prior to arrival at camp every morning. Furthermore, the children are encouraged to bring a hat on warm days. • Shade and Rest Areas: Ensure that there are sufficient shaded areas throughout the camp premises where children can take breaks from direct sunlight. Provide shaded rest areas or tents where participants can relax, rehydrate, and cool down during physically demanding activities. • Hydration Practices: Promote adequate hydration among camp participants by encouraging frequent water breaks and providing access to clean drinking water. Each group has 'water carriers' that they take with them at all times during camp. Campers are encouraged to pack a large bottle of water each day and all of our venues have access to clean drinking water so each camper can refill their water bottle when necessary.
Preventive Measures to Address Safety Hazard
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weather Monitoring: Regularly monitor weather conditions, including temperature and humidity levels, to make informed decisions about adjusting activity schedules, providing additional rest breaks, or modifying outdoor plans if necessary. Stay updated on local weather forecasts to anticipate extreme heat conditions.

- **Time in Shaded or Indoor Areas:** Despite being a predominantly 'outdoor camp', we scheduled frequent indoor activities to give children respite from constant sun exposure. Two lunches per day take place in shaded / indoor areas.
- **Parent/Guardian Communication:** Maintain open communication with parents or guardians about sun safety practices and encourage them to apply sunscreen on their children before arriving at camp. Share guidelines for appropriate clothing and sun protection and request their cooperation in ensuring their child's adherence to sun safety measures.
- **Adaptation to Environmental Conditions:** The Camp Manager may modify activities or locations based on environmental conditions. For example, seek out shaded areas for outdoor activities, consider indoor alternatives during peak heat hours, or rotate groups between inside and outside facilities.

4. Conclusion:

In conclusion, ensuring the safety and well-being of all participants is our utmost priority at The Underdog Games. Through this comprehensive risk assessment, we have identified potential hazards and implemented preventive measures to mitigate risks and create a secure environment for children to thrive and enjoy their summer camp experience.

We are committed to upholding the highest standards of safety, closely monitoring activities, and continuously improving our protocols to address any emerging risks. By adhering to the guidelines and procedures outlined in this risk assessment, we aim to minimize the likelihood of incidents and promote a safe and enjoyable camp environment for all.

However, safety is a collective effort, and we encourage the active participation and cooperation of parents/guardians, camp staff, and participants in maintaining a safe camp environment. By fostering open communication, promoting awareness, and adhering to safety guidelines, we can collectively ensure the well-being of each and every child.

We look forward to an exciting and memorable camp, filled with adventure, growth, and unforgettable experiences. Should you have any questions or concerns regarding the contents of this risk assessment, please do not hesitate to reach out to our dedicated team.

Thank you for entrusting us with the care of your children. Together, let's create a camp that prioritizes safety, nurtures personal development, and creates lasting memories for all involved.

Warm regards,

Kevin Beakey,
Director of the Underdog Games Ltd

