



OUT DOORS INC.

challenging approaches to better mental health

Participant Handbook

Out Doors is committed to fostering and maintaining a respectful, caring and empowering environment which promotes the health and wellbeing of our participants and service users.

We hope this information on Out Doors is helpful to you.



Out Doors Inc. is a community managed organisation.

Association Incorporation No. A14781J

Head Office: 17 Stubbs Street, Kensington, VIC, 3031

Tel: 03 9417 2111

ABN: 25 252 946 980

**Participant: Out Doors defines this to include children, youth, adults and senior citizens of any race – including members of the CALD and Aboriginal communities, culture, language, ethnicity, marital status, parental status, carer status, lawful sexual activity, pregnancy or potential pregnancy, breastfeeding, an irrelevant medical or criminal record, industrial activity, political affiliation, gender identity, orientation or sexuality, family responsibility, social or economic circumstances, association with, or relation to, a person identified on the basis of any of the above attributes or personal association with a person who is identified by reference to the above attributes.*

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INTRODUCTION TO OUT DOORS

- The service being offered to you is provided by a dedicated and highly qualified team of Program Coordinators.
- We have a responsibility to ensure that our staff has a fulfilling and safe work environment so we ask that staff be treated with courtesy and respect at all times.
- We believe that our participants have the right to choose and plan their own recreation/leisure and to be considered as someone with potential, abilities and a future.
- We are committed to human rights, dignity and privacy and will not discriminate against individuals on any basis. However, we reserve the right to refuse service to individuals whom we reasonably believe may pose a risk to the safety or well-being of themselves, other participants, staff or volunteers.
- Participation in Out Doors activities is a significant step towards improving peoples' health and well-being through physical activity and a healthy lifestyle.



ACCESSING SERVICES

- Eligible participants can either apply directly to Out Doors or via their support service, Area Mental Health Service or GP.

Step 1 – Check out our website to learn more about us and our services

<https://www.outdoorsinc.org.au>

Step 2 – Determine if you are eligible to access our programs

Step 3 – Attend a New Participant Info session - if you'd like to learn a bit more about us (optional)

Step 4 – Attend an Intake Assessment (mandatory)

Step 5 – Accept invitation to your first program

Step 6 - Attend program

- Groups who belong to agencies who have a pre-existing arrangement with Out Doors to provide a time-limited service are not required to undertake the Out Doors intake process. These participants will be instructed by their group leader and the Out Doors Program Co-ordinator about what is required.



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION & SUPPORT

Participant Profile

- A participant profile is developed with participants who wish to use Out Doors services. This includes important personal information relevant to your safety and support. If relevant, this will be done in consultation your support person. The participant profile created is used to brief our staff on your individual needs.

Medical Updates

- To ensure your safety, Out Doors collect information about your health, including any illnesses, injuries, operations, allergies etc. This information enables staff to keep up to date on any changes in medication or support needs you may have.

Support Checks

- For participants who attend their first overnight program, a support check is conducted with a nominated support person. Support Checks ensure Out Doors meets its duty of care to our participants and staff.
- Consent is sought to conduct support checks and the results recorded.

These are the types of questions that the Out Doors staff will ask your support person:

- What changes have there been in the participant's life (physical health, mental health, medication, support etc)?
- What situations might challenge the participant's physical, mental or emotional health in a group away from usual supports?
- How does the participant manage their illness/condition when they are not well?
- What support can we provide the participant with?
- Is the person well enough to go on a program with us?
- The nominated Support Person must have had professional contact with the participant within the previous four weeks.
- If information disclosed by the Support Person suggests potential risks, then the Program Manager must be informed and consent must be obtained before including the participant in the activity.

Privacy, Data Collection & Confidentiality

- Out Doors Inc needs to collect information about you for the primary purpose of providing a quality service. To thoroughly assess your suitability for programs and assess risks, we need to collect some personal information. If you do not provide this information; we may be unable to provide you with services.
- From these records, statistical reports are also prepared but do not include any data which could identify you or any member of your family.
- Out Doors Privacy Policy provides guidelines on the collection, use, disclosure, and security of your information. This policy is available on our website: <https://www.outdoorsinc.org.au/privacy-policy/>
- The Privacy Policy contains information detailing how you may request access to, and correction of, your personal information and a complaints procedure in the event of a breach of privacy and how we will deal with such a complaint. Please contact the Program Manager at Out Doors should you wish to access your participant file.
- In exceptional circumstances, access may be denied for legitimate purposes. The reasons for this and possible solutions will be made available to you.
- Out Doors enforce a strict policy of confidentiality and respect for your privacy. Staff and volunteers respect the confidentiality of personal information. We agree not to disclose this information outside Out Doors without your permission unless there is a serious and immediate risk to your health or wellbeing, or the health or wellbeing of others.





Support from Staff

- Out Doors staff members are not permitted to:
 - Assist with personal care or attendant care tasks, such as assisting with toileting or dressing.
 - Carry out nursing or similar duties.
 - Provide crisis support, counselling, psychological intervention or case management beyond their role of coach, instructor or facilitator, and
 - Carry out any task that they have not been authorised, or trained, to do.
 - If you need additional assistance, you must discuss your requirements with our Intake & Assessment Coordinator.
 - Any additional assistance which is agreed to between you and our Intake & Assessment Coordinator will be included in your participant profile.

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Pre-Trip Planning Sessions

- Prior to all overnight trips a pre-trip planning session is conducted. These sessions provide vital information about the upcoming trip and give participants the opportunity to make decisions regarding activities, food etc.
- During these sessions Program Coordinators will inform participants of potential hazards and risks involved in the activities, minimum fitness required, specialist equipment being provided, clothing required, and the location and duration of the activity.
- The sessions are an important part of Out Doors' risk management strategy. They also provide Program Coordinators an opportunity to meet with all participants in the group and ensure that programs are designed and managed to meet the needs of all.
- Failure to attend the pre-trip planning session associated with your trip will result in your place being given to another participant.

Booking an Activity

- Active participants are participants who have completed the intake process and all their forms are up to date.
- Unless otherwise advised, active participants are able to submit up to ten (10) "Expressions of Interest" every six months.
- Participants can expect to be invited to some, but not all of the programs they have expressed interest in. This is due to the demand for programs and to ensure that all participants have fair access.
- Participants are requested to only accept invitations for those activities which they are able to fully commit to and attend on all days of the program including the pre-trip planning session.



Transport and Travel

- Participants are responsible for making their own way to and from the Out Doors office or the designated departure point (except the weekend respite programs).
- Out Doors discourages participants from driving their own car to and from the Out Doors office as all day parking is not readily available. Participants who choose to drive their own car to and from Out Doors do so at their own risk and are responsible for finding their own parking.
- Participants should travel in Out Doors vehicles to and from venues for each trip. It is important for all participants to be committed to each group and assist with preparations at the commencement and pack down at the completion of trips. Private parking is not available at destinations.
- Group travel to and from all trip destinations is always provided by Out Doors in one of our mini buses.
- Out Doors do not pick up or drop off participants en route to and from the departure point. Only under exceptional circumstances can participants pre-arrange an alternative plan with staff. Due to external circumstances, such as traffic, we cannot guarantee the arrival or departure time from the meeting point.





Charges and Fees

- Out Doors is a not-for-profit community organisation and money collected from participants contributes to the administration of its services.
- The cost for the programs vary depending on individual's circumstances (eg. location, having a carer, NDIS Plan, self-funded, etc).
- Out Doors Inc. will review fees and charges on an annual basis in line with the Department of Families, Fairness & Housing (DFFH) fees policy and NDIS Price Guide.
- **Please note:** DFFH fees are paid on the day of the activity or for overnight camps the pre program information meeting and are NOT refundable.
- **DFFH only:** We will not refuse to provide a service to participants facing financial difficulties, so if you would like to discuss the fees please contact the Program Manager. A payment plan may be able to be negotiated.
- **NDIS only:** Please check your NDIS Plan and your Service Agreement with Out Doors to ensure you have enough funds to attend your selected programs.
- Groups who belong to agencies who have a pre-existing arrangement with Out Doors Inc. to provide time-limited services may have alternative arrangements to the fee structure above. These participants will be directed by their group leader or the Out Doors Program Co-ordinator.

Cancellations

- If you have accepted a place on a program but you wish to cancel, please telephone 9417 2111. If the office is unattended, please leave a message on the answering machine.
- When a participant cancels a program with very little notice, this does not allow adequate time for staff to offer the place to another participant. This results in other participants being denied an opportunity to participate in the activity and unnecessary expenditure on staff, accommodation and food etc.

Therefore:

- In line with the procedures outlined in the NDIS Price Guide, in the event a participant cancels on short notice, or is a no show Out Doors Inc reserves the right to charge the full cost of the confirmed activity, Short notice means the following:

Program Type	Required Notice Period
Day Trip	2 business days prior
All Overnight Trips	5 business days prior

- Out Doors Inc may accept a lesser notice period on a case by case basis. Acceptable reasons for cancellation may include participant becoming unwell (in this instance the organisation has the discretion to seek from the participant a medical certificate) or other extenuating circumstances.
- Participants who do not provide adequate notice of cancellation or who fail to show will be charged for the full cost of the activity e.g., day program, camp.
- Participants who fail to give the required notice on 2 or more occasions will be followed up by the Inclusion and Community Liaison Coordinator or the Program Manager. Where no satisfactory reasons are given, then the individual shall be returned to the waiting list.

Refunds

- No refunds will be given.

Use of Equipment and Property

- Out Doors provides quality equipment for programs and activities. This gear is costly and cannot be readily replaced.
- We request that you treat Out Doors property with respect and report any damage to equipment during programs in a timely manner, so that the equipment can be repaired or replaced.



SAFETY

- Safety is a primary concern for Out Doors Inc. It is your responsibility to tell us of any problem which may pose a safety risk to you, other participants, staff or volunteers. Once we are aware of any risk we will take the required action to overcome the problem.
- If the risk seriously affects your safety or the safety of others and cannot be resolved, our service may be suspended or withdrawn.
- Staff must report any problem or issue of concern related to participant safety and well being to the Program Manager of Out Doors. The Program Manager will investigate the report and take appropriate action. Participants will be consulted and advised of any such action.

Acknowledgement of Risks

- Participants are required to indicate that they understand and accept that the activities and programs offered by Out Doors are challenging and carry risks.
- As a participant in a program arranged by Out Doors, you are informed of the risks involved in activities that you may participate in. During intake and assessment you will be requested to sign the consent form that you are also waiving certain rights you may otherwise have against Out Doors in the event of an accident or incident.
- As a participant in an Out Doors program, you understand that at times, you will be undertaking activities involving personal risk of injury or even death. These activities and risks include but are not limited to:

Canoeing / Rafting / Sailing:

Capsizing in cold turbulent water
Injury from rocks or obstacles
Drowning

Bushwalking:

Exposure to heat & cold
Carrying a backpack over rough terrain increases chance of injury
Being lost

Swimming / Surfing / Snorkelling:

Tides & currents
Bites & stings from marine creatures
Drowning

Cycling And Mountain Biking:

Falling off
Minor/major collision with objects, other people or cars
Exposure to heat and cold

Initiative Activities:

Physical contact with other people
Falling from activity equipment
Exposure to sun, rain and cold

Abseiling / Rock climbing / Ropes Course / Caving:

Falling from height
Being struck by falling objects
Rope burns
Confined spaces
Grazes, bruises, bumps and scratches

General Camping / Overnight Accommodation:

Dormitory, tent or shared sleeping
Burns, cuts and food preparation
Group living

Road Travel:

Extended drives, on sometimes winding or uneven surface
Minor or Major collision

- While program leaders are trained and experienced, they are unable to guarantee complete protection from all risks. Activities are often undertaken in remote areas where facilities such as shelter or toilets are not available and medical assistance may be hours or even days away. Some activities involve physical and possibly emotional exertion and are often undertaken outdoors where exposure to the environment may result in sunburn, overheating, sunstroke, frostbite, exposure, bites or stings.
- To minimise risks during activities, participants are required to comply with all directions or instructions given by our staff.

Travel Safety

- By law, participants must wear a seat belt where one is provided in the vehicle. If a participant refuses to wear a seat belt, activities will be suspended until the problem is resolved.
- Participants, who cannot wear a seat belt due to a medical condition or disability, can be exempted if they obtain a medical certificate. If this is the case, please advise the Intake & Assessment Coordinator so that your exemption is included in your participant profile. You **must** have your medical certificate with you at all times when you are being transported.
- If the travelling behaviour of a participant poses a safety risk, or causes discomfort to the staff, volunteers or other participants, activities will be suspended until the problem is resolved.

Alcohol, Drugs & Smoking

- During an activity:
 - You must not consume alcohol or drugs or be under the influence of these substances,
 - You must not carry or use illicit drugs or alcohol,
 - You will not be allowed to go on the scheduled activity if you arrive under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, and
 - You will be removed from a program if you consume such substances.
 - Smoking is not permitted:
 - In Out Doors vehicles, building or in the immediate vicinity of entrances or near non-smoking participants or staff as smoke affects their health,
 - At any rented accommodation or tents used during an activity,
 - Smokers are requested to respect non-smokers' airspace during an activity (ashtrays or butt containers are provided on trips and smokers are not to leave butts on the ground), and
 - Smoking breaks will be provided during program sessions and long bus trips.

Emergency Procedures

- In the event of serious illness or injury, Out Doors Inc staff may decide that it is necessary for an ambulance to be called. However, we will not be responsible for the costs of any medical assistance. Please note: should emergency services be required, police may also attend.

If you have special medical needs please advise our Intake & Assessment Coordinator so that a suitable emergency procedure is included in your participant profile.



RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Participant Responsibilities

- Respect other participants and their rights, privacy, views, opinions, beliefs, and personal space.
- Respect staff and their boundaries.
- Refrain from threatening/violent speech or behaviour.
- Refrain from using alcohol or other substances while at Out Doors office or on Out Doors activities (see Out Doors Inc. Alcohol, Drugs & Smoking policy).
- Provide adequate notice of your wish to withdraw from an activity so that the place can be allocated to another participant.
- Provide feedback to Out Doors after participating in activities.
- Remain responsible for your personal belongings at all times. Out Doors will not be responsible for personal items, including money which is taken on programs.
- Seek permission from staff if you wish to leave the group at any time during a program
- Inform staff of your intention to leave the group.
- Refrain from bringing sharp or dangerous objects along on programs, including knives.
- Actively participate in the activities of the program.
- *NDIS only*: Participants are responsible for liaising with their Support Coordinator to determine what funds they would like to allocate to Out Doors Inc' services.

Participant Rights

- Receive services of the highest standard regardless of social status, age, gender, race, family situation, sexual preference, intellectual, physical or psychiatric disability, religious or political belief.
- Be treated with respect and have your right to practice your culture, and have your values and beliefs supported.
- Know the identity, professional status and qualifications of staff.
- Have privacy during individual consultation with staff, and discussions about service delivery.
- Communicate in the language of your choice and have access to an interpreter if necessary, subject to available resources.
- Participate in activities safely and be free from harassment, threats, etc., from other participants.
- Expect confidentiality in any information communicated to staff, apart from circumstances where you or another person are potentially at risk.
- Expect to be informed and to give written permission before information is shared during referrals to another agency.

Participant Rights (continued)

- Be involved in program planning and evaluation and be able to provide feedback.
- Seek assistance from staff or management if you have a complaint.
- Have an advocate, e.g. friend, family member or another person present at meetings with staff after first notifying Out Doors of their wish to do so.
- Have a support person join you on the first program you attend. Thereafter, we expect participants to attend programs without additional assistance. However, please discuss your needs with our Intake & Assessment Coordinator if you will require ongoing support to access our services. Any support persons will be charged 75% of NDIS fees for attendance on subsequent programs.
- Be free to withdraw from involvement with Out Doors, preferably after discussion with a staff member.
- Participate in the governance and management of Out Doors through membership of the organisation and election to the Council.

Staff Responsibilities: Professional Boundaries

Staff members have a professional relationship with participants and must not:

- Request nor accept social invitations from participants.
- Request gifts from participants.
- Give gifts to participants.
- Borrow money from participants.
- Exploit any relationship with participants for personal gain or advantage.
- Encourage or develop dependency-based relationships with participants.
- Engage in any sexual and/or exploitative relationships with participants.
- Attempt to persuade participants in relation to religious or political beliefs, sexual persuasion or any other matter.

Accept any financial or legal responsibility for a participant such as:

- ⇒ operating a bank account
- ⇒ accepting Power of Attorney
- ⇒ being appointed an executive of a participants' or relative of a participants' estate
- ⇒ influencing the disposition of a participants' will
- ⇒ offering specific investment advice and
- ⇒ participants are required to respect these boundaries.



NATIONAL DISABILITY INSURANCE SCHEME (NDIS)

Service Agreement

- A Service Agreement is made for the purpose of providing you supports under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) plan. Your NDIS plan is expected to remain in effect during the period that supports/programs are provided.
- The signed Service Agreement is made in the context of the NDIS, which is a scheme that aims to:
 - support the independence and social and economic participation of people with disability, and
 - enable people with a disability to exercise choice and control in the pursuit of their goals and the planning and delivery of their supports.

Schedule of supports

- Out Doors agrees to provide you access to agreed number of programs and activities at prices set out in the Fee Schedule (<https://www.outdoorsinc.org.au/how-can-i-participate/ndis-services>) All prices are GST inclusive (if applicable) and include the cost of providing the supports. A copy of support and associated cost will be provided to you.
- Additional expenses (i.e. things that are not included as part of a Participant's NDIS supports) are your responsibility and are not included in the cost of the supports.

Ending the Service Agreement

- Should either Party wish to end this Service Agreement they must give **2 months** notice. If either Party seriously breaches this Service Agreement the requirement of notice will be waived.



Out Doors Responsibility as NDIS Provider

Out Doors agrees to:

- review the provision of supports every 12 months;
- once agreed, provide supports that meet your needs;
- communicate openly and honestly in a timely manner;
- treat you with courtesy and respect;
- consult you about how supports are provided;
- give you information about managing any complaints or disagreements, and details of the cancellation policy (see '*Cancellation*' section for more information);
- listen to your feedback and resolve concerns quickly;
- give you minimum of **48 hours** notice if Out Doors has to change a scheduled program;
- give you the required notice if Out Doors needs to end the Service Agreement (see '*Ending this Service Agreement*' for more information);
- protect your privacy and confidential information;
- provide supports in a manner consistent with all relevant laws, including the *National Disability Insurance Scheme Act 2013* and rules, and the Australian Consumer Law;
- keep accurate records on the supports provided to you, and
- issue regular invoices and statements of the programs delivered to you .

Participant/Participant Representative Responsibilities

You/Your representative agrees to:

- inform Out Doors about how the support meet your needs;
- treat Out Doors with courtesy and respect;
- talk to Out Doors if you have any concerns about the supports being provided;
- give Out Doors notice if you cannot make a scheduled program; (see '*Cancellation*' section for more information);
- if the notice is not provided within the specified timeframe then, cancellation policy will apply;
- give Out Doors the required notice if you need to end the Service Agreement (see '*Ending this Service Agreement*' for more information), and
- let Out Doors know immediately if your NDIS plan is suspended or replaced by a new NDIS plan or your NDIS plan has ceased.

Breach of Rules

If you breach the rules outlined in this handbook you can expect one of the following actions, depending on severity:

- ⇒ Counselling for minor infringements,
- ⇒ Time out from activities,
- ⇒ Evacuation from an activity,
- ⇒ Temporary suspension from participation, and
- ⇒ Termination of services.
- ⇒ Where a crime is committed, the matter will be reported to the Police.

Suggestions or Concerns

- We value your input and would welcome any feedback you may have on Out Doors. Your suggestions or concerns should be directed to the Program Manager, by phone on 9417 2111 or in writing to Out Doors Inc. 17 Stubbs St, Kensington. Vic. 3031.

We ask you to complete a short questionnaire at the end of each activity we run. The information you provide is used to improve our services. We also seek your feedback annually, this information is integral to planning the calendar for the following year.



Complaints Procedure

- Out Doors Inc welcomes complaints as they assist us to improve our services and participant outcomes.
- If you have a complaint or grievance, we encourage you to try to discuss and resolve issues with the person involved or a member of staff at the earliest opportunity.
- If that is unsuccessful or inappropriate you can raise and resolve your complaints using the procedure outlined in our complaints handling policy and procedure available on our public website here: <https://www.outdoorsinc.org.au/about-us/policies-and-statements/#complaints>.
- During this process, you are entitled to a representative of your choice. You will not be disadvantaged by lodging a complaint.

Incident Management Procedure

- Out Doors Inc has an incident management system in place that aims to minimise the risks of incidents and near misses occurring and ensure we can respond appropriately if they do.
- In certain situations, we may need to protect your health and safety and/or the health and safety of others, including taking emergency action or calling emergency services.
- Where required, incidents will be investigated in accordance with the principles of person-centred practice and procedural fairness. If you are involved in an incident, we will ask you to provide feedback during the investigation and in response to any recommendations we propose or actions we take to resolve the incident. You have the right to a representative to assist you during the investigation and resolution of the incident.

If you have any questions, please contact our office on:

9417 2111

Our office hours are:

Monday to Friday from 9:00am – 5:00pm

If the office is unattended, please leave a message on the answering machine and we will return your call.

NOTES

NOTES



Connect with us

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 /company/out-doors-inc-

 /outdoorsinc

Out Doors Inc.
17 Stubbs Street
Kensington VIC 3031
t 03 9417 2111
e indoors@outdoorsinc.org.au
w www.outdoorsinc.org.au