

Experiencing
the future, today.

Outdoor Education Guide



American
International
School of Zagreb

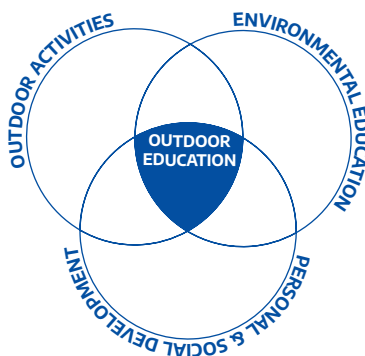
Outdoor Education at AISZ “AISZ-OE”

The Mission of AISZ is to **Develop Skills and Character for Futures Rich with Promise.** AISZ-OE is one of many methods by which the school delivers this mission.

We believe in all of our students and that the futures our students have before them are filled with remarkable opportunities. Learning at American International School of Zagreb prepares capable and empathetic students with the skills, competency, and character to be equipped for an ever-changing and dynamic future where the large majority of employment opportunities have yet to be invented. We believe that the attributes of a successful international citizen are empathy, the making of ethical choices, a service-minded attitude to others, a concern for our environment and resources, a commitment to integrity, and the personal resilience to learn from disappointments and failures.

Outdoor Education is an essential component of our mission-based educational program. Through the active participation in outdoor education, AISZ students and staff enhance their personal and social development, learn, respond to environmental issues through first hand experience and action, and develop a set of organized outdoor skills that build resilience and leadership qualities.

SAFE AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE



Outdoor Education Model
(Higgins, 2005)

AISZ Outdoor Education is a developmentally appropriate, cohesive Pre K - 12 program that provides students with the opportunity to explore and develop a range of essential skills and knowledge that are vital in helping shape strong, self-assured, and happy young adults.

Each experience places the educational outcomes at the center of the program and allows a clear pathway of individual and social development unique to each student. By focusing on outcomes before activity, our programs ensure that each student is on a pathway of development regardless of their starting point.

Outdoor education provides opportunities for students to develop positive relationships with the environment and enhance their personal and social competencies. By engaging students in practical active learning experiences, students interact with the natural world beyond the classroom and social media inputs.

In the natural world, students develop the ability to move safely and competently while developing an important and positive relationship with the environment. Service to self and others, environmental sustainability and stewardship, along with personal development are all essential parts of each engagement.

Outdoor education allows students to disengage with the ever present impact of media and develop an appreciation of green-time rather than screen-time.

STANDARDS

<https://outdooreducationaustralia.org.au/education/curriculum-guidelines>

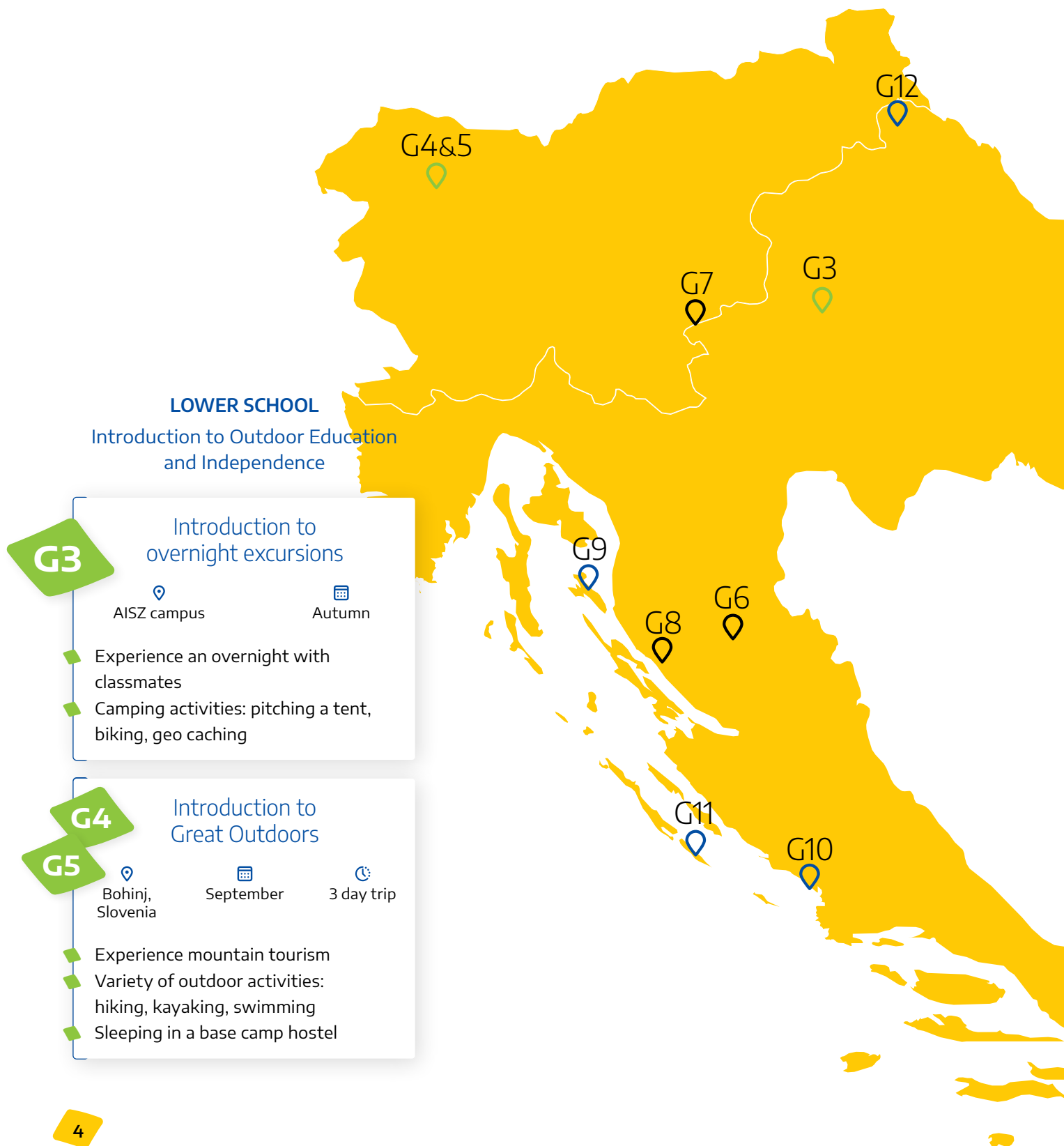


**We are all better
than we know.
If only we can be
brought to realise this,
we may never again
be prepared to settle
for anything else.**

Kurt Hahn

Outdoor Education Sequential Learning Experiences

Grade level sequenced progression of outdoor skills, attitudes, and activities:



HIGH SCHOOL

Sea Based

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Facing the Challenge - Land Based

G6

HERO'S JOURNEY

Welcome to the mountains

Lika September 4 day trip

- Preparatory journey type activities – land based
- Day trips hiking, orienteering, climbing, cooking
- Sleeping in a hostels, cabins

G7

Introduction to land based travel

Zumberak September 4 day trip

- Preparatory journey type activities – land based
- Longer outdoor activities, hiking, biking, rafting
- Sleeping in tents, base camp

G8

HERO'S JOURNEY

Mountain Journey

Velebit September 4 day trip

- Camping on the multiple locations on the way
- Hiking journey type activity
- Advanced hiking, caving, climbing, orienteering, cooking
- Sleeping in the self-made shelters

G9

HERO'S JOURNEY

Welcome to the Sea

Rab September 4 day trip

- Preparatory journey type activities – sea based
- Short sea based outdoor activities, coastal hiking, introduction to sea kayaking
- Camping in tents, base camp

G10

HERO'S JOURNEY

Sea Journey

Zlarin September 4 day trip

- Kayak journey type activity
- Advanced sea kayaking – islands hopping, service project, cooking
- Tent camping on the multiple locations on the way

G11

HERO'S JOURNEY

Capstone Challenge Introduction to Sailing

Kornati September 3 ½ day trip

- Intro to crew skills, team building, cooking, the adventurous journey
- Sleeping on a sailing boat, traveling Adriatic
- Multiple ports

G12

Day of Adrenaline

Zasadbreg Daytrip

- IBDP The Final Year
- Team Bonding and the Forming of Lasting Relationships
- Team building games and competition

EXPLORING THE OUTDOORS

Outdoor Education in the Lower School

An Overview

PREK-^{GRADE}5

In the Lower School, we believe that taking learning outdoors and developing an appreciation for nature supports the holistic development of children. In addition, it can have a positive impact on their physical health, emotional well-being, cognitive development, environmental awareness, and social skills. As a matter of fact, research suggests that being in nature can reduce stress, anxiety, and depression in children, and it can also boost their self-esteem and confidence. Ultimately, our goal is to develop

in children an appreciation for the natural world and respect for the environment as they build their understanding of the impact that humans have on the environment, and inspire them to take action to protect it. We do this throughout the school year by exploring the outdoors in our community. Classes regularly plan excursions to Bundeck Park for biking, rollerblading, hiking, or just finding a spot in the shade to read. Field trips also take place to area locales such as Eco house Bubamara and Medvednica.



BUILDING INDEPENDENCE

Introduction of Extended Learning Away from Home

**Introduction
to Overnight
Excursions
on Campus**

GRADE
3

Introducing overnight excursions at school for 3rd graders is a great opportunity for students to learn valuable life skills and enhance their appreciation for nature. Engaging in camping activities offers an engaging and hands-on experience that allows students to learn about ecology, wildlife, and the environment. It can also provide a unique opportunity for students to develop independence, responsibility, teamwork, and problem-solving skills, as they learn to set up tents, prepare meals, and navigate the

outdoors through activities such as geocaching. Additionally, camping can create a sense of community and foster friendships among students as they bond over shared experiences and challenges. Overall, overnight camping at school will be a fun and rewarding educational experience for 3rd graders as they participate in group socializing through games such as flashlight games, tag, dodgeball, frisbee, and quieter activities, like storytime.

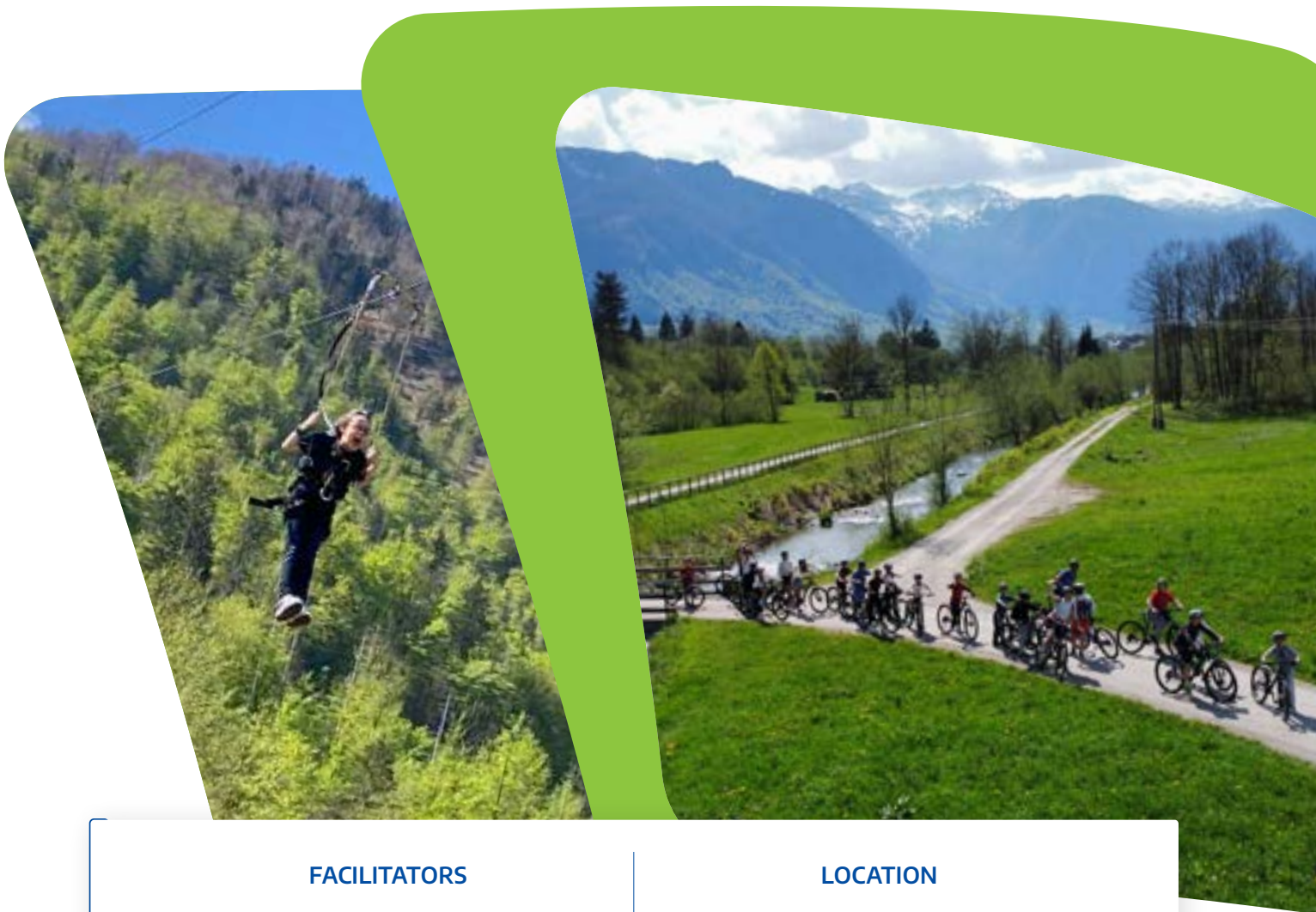


Introduction to Overnight Trips

GRADE
4 & 5

Outdoor trips that focus on hiking, biking, and kayaking are an excellent way to connect with nature, challenge oneself physically, and create lasting memories. These trips typically last for 3 days and 2 nights, and are designed to provide our students with a well-rounded outdoor experience along with an overnight experience in a hostel-type setting. Hiking through scenic trails allows participants to explore the natural beauty of Lake Bohinj in Slovenia, while biking and hiking provides an opportunity to cover

more ground and take in breathtaking vistas. Kayaking and canoeing on the lake itself offers a chance to experience the peacefulness of the water and observe wildlife up close surrounded by a majestic natural landscape. With a focus on outdoor learning experience, these trips are a perfect introduction for our students into the beauty of the outdoors and provide the foundation to support the more adventurous trips coming up in Middle School.



FACILITATORS



www.sport4you.hr

LOCATION

**Hostel pod Voglom Bohinj,
Slovenia**

Upper School Learning by Land and Sea

Middle School - By Land

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

An introduction to Backpacking

GRADE

6

Backpacking is an exhilarating way to explore the great outdoors, where the focus is on hiking, land navigation, and teamwork. It involves carrying all necessary equipment and supplies on your back, and spending several days and nights camping in the wilderness around Veliki Zitnik Croatia. In this 4-day, 3-night mountain hut based backpacking trip, participants will embark on a rewarding journey through natural terrain, while staying in a cozy mountain hut. The trip will emphasize the

importance of land navigation, as participants will need to rely on maps, compasses, and other navigational tools to navigate through the terrain with support. In addition, team work will be essential to ensure everyone's safety and well-being, as well as to achieve the group's goals. Overall, this backpacking trip promises to be unforgettable, filled with stunning views, personal challenges, and opportunities for personal and group growth.



FACILITATORS



**OUTWARD BOUND
CROATIA**

www.outwardboundcroatia.com

LOCATION

**Veliki Zitnik,
Croatia**

Green Cycle Camping Journey

GRADE

7

By Grade 7, students build on the skills learned in previous years and apply them in this multi-format learning experience. Tent camping, hiking, biking, land navigation, and teamwork are all exciting components of successful outdoor pursuits. Over the course of four days and three nights, participants in such an adventure will experience a range of challenges and rewards. Each day will begin with the team packing up their gear and setting off on a new learning experience. Hiking and biking will take the team through varied

terrain, while learning and enhancing their land navigation skills will test their ability to read maps and compasses. In the evenings, the team will set up camp and work together to build fires, cook meals, and pitch their tents. Throughout the trip, teamwork will be key, as everyone works together to overcome obstacles and reach their shared goals. By the end of the trip, students will have not only gained new skills and experiences, but also formed strong bonds with their fellow explorers.



FACILITATORS



www.sportiputovanja.hr

LOCATION

**Gabrovica-Budinjak -
Sv. Gera-Sosice,
Croatia**

THE HERO'S JOURNEY 1 - BY LAND

The Culmination of Middle School Land Based Programs

GRADE

8

The Middle School land-based outdoor education program culminates in The Hero's Journey.

The Hero's Journey is a classic narrative framework that has been used in many stories throughout history. For our students, the journey involves a 4-day, 3-night hiking and camping trip where the hero must navigate the wilderness, work together with their team, and learn to fend for themselves. The journey requires our hero to cook meals on a campfire, and sleep in tents and shelters in a natural remote setting. Land navigation is also a critical skill that the hero must possess, as they will need to navigate the wilderness and find their way to the campsite for each night's camp. Teamwork is essential, as the hero will need to rely on their teammates to help carry gear, set up

camp, and prepare meals. Self-sufficiency is a key theme of this journey, as the hero learns to take care of themselves and their team. This includes cooking meals, setting up shelter, and navigating the wilderness.

The hero's journey through the wilderness is not only a physical challenge but also a mental one. They learn to overcome obstacles and fears, rely on their own skills and judgment, and ultimately emerge from the journey as a stronger, more capable person. Through this experience, they will gain a sense of self-reliance and confidence that will serve them well in their future endeavors. This journey will help prepare them for their final year of Middle School.



FACILITATORS



**OUTWARD BOUND
CROATIA**

www.outwardboundcroatia.com

LOCATION

**Baske Ostarije - Dabarska
Kosa - Bacic Kuk - Kiza,
Velebit Mountain Range,
Croatia**

High School
by Sea

THE HERO'S JOURNEY 2

The Boundless Sea

GRADE

9

This 4-day, 3-night beginner-level kayaking and camping trip is a great way to explore the great outdoors and develop skills in navigation, campcraft, cooking, and teamwork. During this trip, participants will learn how to set up and take down a tent or bivouac, as well as how to navigate using a map and compass. Basic campcraft skills, such as building a fire and selecting a campsite, will also be taught. Cooking will be an important part of the trip, and participants will learn how to prepare meals over a campfire or camp stove. They will also learn about food storage and how to pack and carry food for a multi-day trip.

Teamwork will be emphasized throughout the trip, as participants will need to work together to paddle their kayaks and set up camp. They will also learn about the importance of communication and cooperation when working in a group. Overall, this trip is designed to provide participants with an immersive outdoor experience that will build upon and develop valuable skills and build their confidence in camping and kayaking. It is perfect for beginners who are looking to learn new skills and explore the great outdoors in a safe and supportive environment.



FACILITATORS



**OUTWARD BOUND
CROATIA**

www.outwardboundcroatia.com

LOCATION

**Lopar,
Island of Rab,
Croatia**

**The Island
Journey**

GRADE
10

This 4-day, 3-night tent camping trip will enable students to build on their sea kayaking skills from the year before or learn for the first time. The journey will involve tent camping, sea navigation, and teamwork can be an exhilarating experience for outdoor enthusiasts. Students will move between islands, which are protected from weather by sea kayak, taking their camp with

them to set up at a different location each evening. Students will gain awareness of the impact of tides, winds, and distance on the planning of a journey. Finally, teamwork will be essential to the success of the trip, as everyone will need to work together to ensure that everyone is safe and has an enjoyable experience.



FACILITATORS



www.peakandpaddlecroatia.com

LOCATION

**Sibenik Archipelago,
Otok Zlarin,
Croatia**

CAPSTONE EXPERIENCE: ICONIC CROATIA

Introduction to Sailing

GRADE
11

In Grade 11, our Outdoor Education Program culminates with a capstone experience iconic of Croatia and the spirit of adventure. It is designed around a Croatian experience that will last a lifetime.

Sailing Croatia is an exhilarating experience that offers world-class sailing destinations for both beginners and experienced sailors alike. This beautiful country boasts over 1,000 islands, clear blue waters, and gentle winds that make it an ideal location for sailing. Basic sailing and crew skills, sea navigation, and teamwork are essential to make the most of the Grade 11 sailing trip. With a qualified skipper to supervise, our students will

be able to learn these skills, while enjoying the stunning scenery. Additionally, swimming and team-building activities are available to enhance the experience. Before setting sail, sailing theory and lessons are conducted at the AISZ to provide the necessary knowledge and skills to make the trip a success. Whether students are experienced sailors or a first-timer, this capstone challenge will remain with our students for a long time to come. Croatia is the perfect place to embark on a sailing experience.

This is the only trip in the entire AISZ Outdoor Education Program that requires a parental contribution to offset costs.



FACILITATORS



www.skeneryachting.com

LOCATION

**Kornati Archipelago,
Otok Telascica,
Croatia**

PREPARING TO LEAVE SCHOOL

Meeting Personal Challenge, Forming Lifelong Bonds, and Team Building

GRADE
12

The Grade 12 Day Trip is designed to provide students with a much-needed break from the online world, technology and the pressures of examination course. This unique outdoor excursion creates an environment where both staff and teachers can connect on a different level, fostering positive relationships that will be invaluable during the students' final and most challenging school year. Additionally, the trip aims to enhance self-awareness and promote understanding of others.

Throughout the course of a full day, students are engaged in a diverse range of team building activities. These activities incorporate elements of competition and collaboration, focusing on strengthening essential leadership skills such as teamwork, perseverance, and effective communication. By participating in these challenges, students are given ample opportunities to surpass their perceived mental and physical limitations, pushing themselves to achieve new heights.

Beyond the educational aspect, the Grade 12 Day Trip is also a time of joy and informality. As students prepare to embark on their final year of high school and transition into new independent adventures after graduation, this trip serves as a bridge between their past and future. It provides a platform for bonding and camaraderie among classmates, creating lasting memories and forging deeper connections.

Overall, the Grade 12 Day Trip goes beyond being a simple excursion. It acts as a catalyst for personal growth, character development, and the cultivation of essential life skills. By disconnecting from the digital world, students are able to fully immerse themselves in an outdoor environment that encourages reflection, exploration, and self-discovery. This transformative experience sets the stage for a successful final year of high school and equips students with the tools they need for their future endeavors.



Skiing

From Grade 3 to Grade 12, all students have a February day set aside to participate in a Ski Day with their grade level. Learning to ski can offer a range of physical, mental, and social benefits, some of the most notable being:

- 1. Physical Fitness:** Skiing is a physically demanding sport that requires strength, endurance, balance, and coordination. By regularly skiing, you can improve your cardiovascular health, build muscular strength and endurance, and increase your flexibility and agility.
- 2. Mental Health:** Skiing is an excellent way to reduce stress and improve mental health. Being outdoors in the fresh air and surrounded by natural beauty can help reduce anxiety, depression, and feelings of isolation.
- 3. Increased Confidence:** Learning a new skill can be challenging, but once you start to see progress, your confidence will grow. Skiing can be an empowering experience as you challenge yourself and overcome obstacles.
- 4. Improved Social Skills:** Skiing is a social activity, and it can help you make new friends and strengthen existing relationships. Skiing with others can help you learn teamwork, communication, and leadership skills.
- 5. Outdoor Recreation:** Skiing provides a fun and exciting way to enjoy the great outdoors. It's an excellent opportunity to connect with nature and experience the beauty of snow-capped mountains and pristine landscapes.
- 6. Lifetime Sport:** Skiing can be enjoyed at any age and is a sport that you can continue to do throughout your entire life. It's an excellent way to stay active, healthy, and engaged with the world around you.

Learning to ski can provide numerous physical, mental, and social benefits that can enhance your overall quality of life. All skiing activities take place on Mt. Sljeme, just north of Zagreb, or in Slovenia.





**Engaging in the serene
beauty of nature can
ignite feelings of joy
and tranquility within
us, as affirmed by the
field of Environmental
Psychology**

Bell, Fisher, Baum,
Greene, 1996

Non-Expedition Outdoor Education Program

Recognizing the significance of fostering students' intellectual, physical, social, and emotional well-being to help them reach their full potential, AISZ has developed a comprehensive Outdoor Education program that promotes balance and enhances the overall school experience. By integrating social and emotional skills with physical fitness, we aim to provide a holistic learning environment.

The AISZ Outdoor Education class offers a wide range of topics centered around the wonders of the natural environment, outdoor activities, and sustainability. Given the variability of weather and seasonal patterns, the activities are flexible and adaptable. Students will explore various subjects, including weather analysis and forecasting, plant life and gardening, knot tying, first aid techniques, and orientation and navigation skills. Additionally, the program emphasizes movement and travel, encompassing activities such as hiking, biking, climbing, rowing, kayaking, sailing, as well as essential skills like packing, camping, camp craft, open-fire cooking, and constructing shelters.

Outdoor education plays a pivotal role in teaching students essential life skills such as self-reliance, interdependence, and leadership. It fosters an adventurous spirit, enables individuals to manage personal risks, encourages safe exploration of nature, emphasizes the lifelong benefits of outdoor recreation for both physical and mental well-being, facilitates a direct understanding of nature through firsthand experiences, and cultivates deeper connections between humans and the natural world.

By enriching our existing Physical Education curriculum with knowledge and experiences specific to outdoor activities, movement, and planning, the AISZ Outdoor Education program not only complements our overall curriculum but also equips students with valuable skills that enable them to be active team members while fostering independence and self-reliance.



PRACTICAL

- ◆ Developing independent exploration skills
 - ◆ City (short route) biking, preparing a bike, basic bike safety
 - ◆ Short route hiking, proper postures, equipment and packing
 - ◆ Basic rock climbing techniques, safe rope handling, climbing equipment use and care
 - ◆ Swimming test
 - ◆ Rowing, basic position and posture
 - ◆ Boat entering and exiting

OUTDOOR LIVING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

- ◆ Development of independent living skills and knowledge
 - ◆ Camp set up
 - ◆ Setting up a tent
 - ◆ Starting and handling camp fire

GROUP DYNAMICS SKILLS AND LEADERSHIP

- ◆ Analysis of group dynamics outdoors
 - ◆ Importance of teamwork, independence and interdependence

OUTDOOR ACTIVITY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

- ◆ Skills needed for independent journeys
 - ◆ Basic map reading
 - ◆ Basic knots
 - ◆ Trip planning and preparation

SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OUTDOORS

- ◆ Developing decision making for being safe outdoors
 - ◆ Reading weather and forecast
 - ◆ Outdoor meal plan
 - ◆ Basic First aid

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

- ◆ Identifying and developing knowledge of the environment required for safe and effective outdoor activity involvement
 - ◆ Basic plant recognition
 - ◆ Basic gardening
 - ◆ Understanding of natural life cycles and their interdependence with the environment

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT, CONSERVATION AND CULTURE

- ◆ Ways of conserving and caring for nature
 - ◆ Personal project connected with ecology, sustainability or knowledge about the nature and outdoor recreation

PRACTICAL

- ▀ Developing independent exploration skills
 - ▀ City (short route) biking, preparing a bike, basic bike safety
 - ▀ Short route hiking, proper postures, equipment and packing
 - ▀ Basic rock climbing techniques, safe rope handling, climbing equipment use and care
 - ▀ Swimming test
 - ▀ Rowing, basic position and posture
 - ▀ Boat entering and exiting

OUTDOOR LIVING KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

- ▀ Development of independent living skills and knowledge
 - ▀ Camp set up
 - ▀ Setting up an improvised shelter
 - ▀ Starting and handling camp fire

GROUP DYNAMICS SKILLS AND LEADERSHIP

- ▀ Analysis of group dynamics
 - ▀ Teamwork and roles in the team.
 - ▀ Leadership in the outdoor activities

OUTDOOR ACTIVITY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

- ▀ Skills needed for independent journeys
 - ▀ Orientation and navigation
 - ▀ Knots
 - ▀ Trip planning and preparation

SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OUTDOORS

- ▀ Developing decision making for being safe outdoors
 - ▀ Reading weather and forecast
 - ▀ Healthy multi-day outdoor meal plan
 - ▀ Basic First aid

ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS

- ▀ Identifying and developing knowledge of the environment
 - ▀ Basic plant recognition (focus on edible/poisonous plants)
 - ▀ Basic gardening
 - ▀ Understanding of natural life cycles and their interdependence with the environment

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT, CONSERVATION AND CULTURE

- ▀ Ways of conserving and caring for nature
 - ▀ Personal project connected with ecology, sustainability or knowledge about the nature and outdoor recreation

The Duke of Edinburgh International Award

AISZ is proud to be able to offer The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award, which is a worldwide initiative promoting non-formal education and learning that encourages young people to strive for greatness, celebrate their accomplishments, and make a positive impact on their surroundings. By fostering transferable skills, enhancing fitness levels, nurturing a spirit of adventure, and volunteering within their communities, the Award empowers young individuals to identify their purpose, passions, and niche in society.

Operating in over 130 countries and territories, the Award has inspired countless young people. While the Award framework remains consistent worldwide, each participant creates a customized program unique to their aspirations and goals. Currently, over a million young people are participating in the Award globally, collaborating with a vast network of youth-focused partners and operators, including schools, youth organizations, examination boards, and youth offender institutions.



<https://intaward.org>





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