



## EXCURSION POLICY

**\*\*Excursion Policy – to be utilised in conjunction with Variation to Routine Policy.**

### Objectives - Policy statement

- 1.1 Determining the educational value of an excursion must take account of the needs and resources of the school, the needs of the students and the total learning program.
- 1.2 Excursions are inclusive, and all students within the specific learning group are to be given the opportunity to participate.
- 1.3 A duty of care is owed to students in the school environment and while on excursions.
- 1.4 The department's duty of care owed to students for the duration of an excursion cannot be delegated from the school to parents, caregivers, volunteers or employees of external organisations.
- 1.5 The obligation to report suspected risk of harm to children and young people applies throughout all stages of an excursion, as it does in schools
- 1.6 A risk assessment is to be conducted and a risk management plan developed before seeking approval for any excursion.
- 1.7 Signed consent forms granting permission for students to participate in excursions and a medical information form are to be obtained from parents or caregivers.
- 1.8 Safe transport or a safe walking route is to be organised for excursions.
- 1.9 Students must behave appropriately at all times while on excursions, including when animals are encountered.

### 2 Context

- 2.1 The department is committed to providing a safe, secure, disciplined and quality learning environment in which students can develop their individual talents, interests and abilities through a curriculum that fosters the intellectual, physical, social and moral development of the student. Excursions are part of quality teaching and learning programs.
- 2.2 Excursions are a valuable teaching and learning vehicle, often integral to quality curriculum delivery in that they provide access to teaching content and learning experiences not available at the school.
- 2.3 School excursions vary in terms of the curriculum focus, the students involved, the duration of the excursion and the excursion venue(s). The student group participating in the excursion may be a class or classes or students drawn from a number of classes. They may be, for example, a team, a performance group or an audience for a performance. An excursion can range from a brief visit of less than one hour to a local point of interest, to an extended journey occupying a number of days or weeks requiring overnight or long term accommodation.
- 2.4 Some excursions involve overseas travel. Particular additional mandatory procedures relate to such excursions.
- 2.5 Workplace learning is not covered by this policy. See implementation procedures.
- 2.6 The department will not accept responsibility for privately arranged tours.

### 3.Responsibilities and delegations

- 3.1 A school excursion is initiated, organised and supervised by a school and approved by the principal and, when more than one school is involved, the principals of all participating schools.
- 3.2 Overseas excursions must have the endorsement of the principal and, when more than one school is involved, the principals of all participating schools. In addition, overseas excursions must be approved by the Executive Director, Public Schools NSW on the recommendation of the Director, Public Schools NSW.
- 3.3 The department's duty of care owed to students for the duration of an excursion cannot be delegated from the school to parents, caregivers, volunteers or employees of external organisations.

## IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURES

### Definition

School Excursions are structured learning experiences provided by, or under the auspices of, the school which are conducted external to the school site.

### Applicability

- While they are generally applicable to all schools, in some specific circumstances, additional procedures will apply. The specific circumstances may relate to the excursion venue (e.g. an overseas venue or one involving swimming or water activities) the nature of the school (e.g. a residential high school or an education and training unit in a Juvenile Justice Centre) or the nature of the student group (e.g. preschool children or students with particular medical conditions)
- There are school-related or school-endorsed activities which have a number of similar characteristics to school excursions but which are not covered by the School Excursions Policy and Implementation Procedures because they also contain key elements which are inconsistent with principles outlined in the policy. Examples include overseas student exchange programs, such as *AFS/ JENESYS*, and youth leadership and development programs such as *The Duke of Edinburgh's Award* and *World Challenge*. These programs are addressed in a separate document.
- Workplace learning is not covered by this policy or these procedures. See [Workplace Learning Policy for Secondary Students in Government Schools and TAFE NSW Institutes](#).
- Excursions conducted as part of Special Religious Education (SRE) are the responsibility of the religious persuasion through authorised representatives of approved providers and are not covered by these procedures. See instead Section 2 (d) i *Excursions and Visits* in the [Religious Education Policy Implementation Procedures](#).

### “Virtual Excursions”

- With the enhancement of Information and Communications Technology, schools are including a greater variety of “virtual excursions” in their teaching and learning programs. Using videoconferencing and the associated technologies, students are visiting locations across the globe and interacting in real time with other students, teachers and content specialists.
- Many of the policy statements and procedures which follow are relevant to “virtual excursions”. In particular, issues of curriculum relevance and educational value; duty of care and risk management; child protection; parental consent; and appropriate student behaviour are worth considering when planning “virtual excursions”.

### Delegations for Approval of Excursions

- School excursions within Australia are initiated, organised and supervised by school staff and must be approved by the school principal and, when more than one school is involved, the principals of all participating schools.
- Overseas excursions require the approval of the Executive Director following a submission from the Principal which must be endorsed by the Director, NSW Public Schools.

### **Review of School Excursion Procedures**

- Schools are to regularly review and update their procedures for the safe conduct of excursions on the basis of implementation experience, systemic and locally produced risk profiles and the evaluation of teaching and learning outcomes. Staff de-briefing following excursions provides an opportunity to identifying successful practice as well as areas for improvement.

**The implementation procedures which follow are structured around, and elaborate, the nine policy principles which appear in the Department's *Excursions Policy*.**

### **EDUCATIONAL VALUE**

**Determining the educational value of an excursion must take account of the needs and resources of the school, the needs of the students and the impact on the continuity of regular teaching and learning programs for participating teachers and students.**

- While recognising the potential benefits of excursions, schools must also recognise that such activities may interrupt regular learning routines of students. The rationale for any excursion should reference the school's curriculum objectives and should be relevant to their achievement.
- Prior to any excursion there must be consultation between the principal and teacher or teachers concerned with its organisation. Except as provided for in unscheduled activities, parents or caregivers must be informed in writing of the details of any excursion, including details of all planned activities, their educational value, the method of transport and level of supervision.

### **Film screenings and live performances**

- Prior to approving excursions involving film screenings and live performances, principals must give careful consideration to the appropriateness of the film or performance for the proposed viewing group.
- Staff giving consideration to excursions involving film screenings should refer to [Use of Classified Films, Videos, DVDs and Computer Games in Schools \(Office of Schools June 2007\)](#).
- Staff giving consideration to excursions involving live performances, including public lectures and presentations, should refer to the [Controversial Issues in Schools policy](#).

### **INCLUSIVITY**

**Excursions are inclusive, and all students in the specific learning group, including those with disabilities, are to be given the opportunity to participate.**

- Unless exceptional circumstances exist, all students should have the opportunity to participate in an excursion. Costs should be organised to ensure that there is no undue financial burden imposed upon individual members of the group or their families. Where financial hardship is understood to be the reason for a student's non-participation, schools must endeavour to provide financial assistance.
- Where a student cannot participate in an excursion, alternate activities must be available that provide for similar learning outcomes, particularly where an assessment task relates to the excursion.

- The support needs of students with disabilities or medical conditions will require careful consideration and consultation with parents and caregivers. Appropriate support should be provided for these students so they can access the learning experiences available through excursions.
- Parents and caregivers, including those of students from language backgrounds other than English, should be informed of the educational value of the excursion and how it is an integral part of the learning program.
- Nothing in the above paragraphs is intended to prevent schools from selecting individual students or groups of students to represent the school at functions, events or competitions held at venues outside the school.

## DUTY OF CARE

### **A duty of care is owed to students in the school environment and while on excursions.**

- Excursions are potentially the most hazardous activities for school-related accidents. The duty of care owed to students applies whether the school excursion is held during school hours, after school, on the weekend or during school holidays.
- Teachers planning excursions must adopt a risk management approach to emergency response planning, including medical procedures, and should check relevant forecasts or other safety warnings, including fire bans, immediately prior to events. In consultation with relevant authorities, schools must be prepared to alter or cancel excursions due to emerging safety concerns. These decisions must be communicated to students and parents as soon as possible. Refer to the Occupational Health and Safety Directorate's [Safety Management System](#) (Intranet access only) and, in particular, the Department's [Emergency Management Guidelines](#) (intranet access only).
- All excursions must be accompanied by a member of staff who has undertaken [emergency care training](#) (Intranet access only) and whose qualifications are current. An appropriately equipped first aid kit must be taken on all excursions.
- Additionally, principals are to ensure that any excursion involving swimming or water activities and any excursion involving overnight stays, includes a member of staff who possesses current accreditation in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and emergency care.
- Staff planning excursions involving students diagnosed at risk of an emergency will consider issues such as administration of prescribed and emergency medication (e.g. EpiPen, Ventolin) health care procedures and emergency response plans.
- Particular care should be taken where casual staff attend and/or replace regular staff members on excursions. Among other things, they must be briefed about any student with particular health care needs and the role they may have in supporting those needs. They must also be briefed on any student who is the subject of a risk management plan.
- Under occupational health and safety legislation, the Department has an obligation to ensure the health and safety of staff at work. Consequently, excursion planning is to take account of staff health and safety issues in addition to those of students.

### **Teacher to student ratios**

- The number of teachers to accompany the students for each excursion is to be determined by the principal. Decisions about the number of students and teachers should take into account factors such as the age of the students, their maturity, the location of the excursion, specific needs of students, anticipated behaviour and the nature of the activities to be undertaken.
- Principals in determining the number of teachers required for an excursion should be guided by Department statements on class sizes. Fewer students per teacher will be necessary for some

excursions such as bushwalking. Particular aquatic and outdoor recreation activities have specific teacher/instructor to student ratios. These are identified in the Guidelines for Specific Activities section of [Sport and Physical Activity in Schools, Safe Conduct Guidelines](#).

- There must be sufficient numbers of appropriate, responsible adults, including support teachers and school learning support officers, to ensure and assist with adequate supervision. Other adults assisting with supervision may include parents, volunteers, specialist instructors and venue staff. Note, however, the directions contained in the Section 'Carers, Parents and Volunteers' below.
- Students on excursion must be subject to direct adult supervision and should not be allowed to 'go off on their own'. For exceptional circumstances, see 'Unsupervised Activities' below.

### **Overnight excursions**

- On overnight and extended excursions, supervisory and accommodation arrangements are to be such that no staff member or accompanying adult is placed in a position where there is potential for allegations of improper conduct to be made. In particular, sleeping and washing arrangements should not place any adults in a situation where the propriety of their behaviour could be questioned. Likewise, for sleeping and supervisory arrangements every attempt must be made to ensure that there is no sexual contact between students.
- For coeducational groups, male and female staff supervisors are required. Schools experiencing difficulties in meeting this requirement should consult their School Education Director.

### **Unsupervised activities**

- On rare occasions, where it is proposed that an individual or a small group of mature students participate in a specialised excursion, it may be necessary for part of the excursion (e.g. independent travel) or all of the activity to take place without the direct supervision of a staff member. In such circumstances, it is imperative that parents or caregivers be fully informed of, and agree to the arrangements, and that the principal and the teacher in charge of the excursion take all steps to ensure the safety and welfare of the unaccompanied students.

### **Privately Arranged Tours**

- The Department of Education and Training and its schools will not accept any responsibility or liability in respect of students or teachers who choose to become involved in privately arranged tours
- A privately arranged tour has the following characteristics:
  - the tour is undertaken by students and/or adults in a private capacity;
  - the tour is arranged by an agency external to the school;
  - persons undertaking the tour do not travel under a name associated with the school e.g. XYZ High School Band;
  - the tour is not endorsed, authorised or otherwise approved by the principal.

## **PARENTS, CAREGIVERS AND VOLUNTEERS**

**The Department's duty of care owed to students for the duration of an excursion cannot be delegated from the school to parents, caregivers, volunteers or individuals associated with external organisations.**

- Parents or caregivers will frequently volunteer to assist in excursions. The number of parents or caregivers who might be of assistance will vary according to circumstances.
- The principal must be satisfied that there are sufficient teachers to maintain adequate control of the whole excursion. Teachers retain the ultimate responsibility for supervision.

- In most circumstances parents, caregivers and volunteers who assist on excursions should not have to pay to attend.
- Parents, caregivers and volunteers must be briefed on safety and behaviour measures prior to the excursion to ensure competency. Principals must ensure that all parents, caregivers or volunteers accompanying school excursions complete a Prohibited Employment Declaration prior to the excursion, in terms of the Department's Working with Children Check Policy
- Volunteers are not to accompany the excursion if:
  - a) they refuse to complete the Prohibited Employment Declaration, or
  - b) they indicate they are a prohibited person.
- Depending on the circumstances, principals might also consider:
  - a) checking the Department's not to be employed list, or
  - b) consulting referees.

## CHILD PROTECTION

### **The obligation to report suspected risk of harm to children and young people applies throughout all stages of an excursion, as it does in schools.**

- The same standards of conduct and the obligation to report suspected risk of harm to children and young people, including any allegation of child abuse or misconduct or improper conduct which may involve child abuse by an employee against children or young people, apply throughout all stages of an excursion, as they do in schools.
- Students should be briefed about their right to be safe, relevant safety strategies and ways of seeking help should concerns arise during an excursion.
- The principal or other delegated person must ascertain if an employer or contractor providing a service to students during a school excursion is registered with an Approved Screening Agency (ASA) for the purpose of conducting the [Working with Children Check](#) on their employees. The principal or other delegated person must ascertain that the employer or contractor has met their legal requirements as a child-related employer. If the employer or contractor is not registered with an ASA, they must not be used to provide a service to students until such time as they:
  - a) are registered with an ASA;
  - b) have screened those staff considered to be engaged in paid child-related employment; and
  - c) have required those staff to complete [Prohibited Employment Declarations](#).
- The Department's [Employment Screening Unit](#) (Intranet access only) can assist child-related employers or contractors to meet their obligations under the [Commission for Children and Young People Act 1998](#) prior to being engaged by a school to provide services to students during a school excursion.
- Further information about the requirements of the Working with Children Check is available from the [Working with Children Check Procedures for Principals](#) website.

### **Child Protection Issues relating to Excursions to Courts**

- Teachers planning excursions to courts and court hearings should be mindful of the potential for students to be exposed to psychological harm and trauma due to the nature of the matters being heard before some courts. For example, cases regarding allegations of sexual and physical assault are likely to involve assaults being described in explicit detail and victims being cross-examined extensively on their version of events. Photographic or other exhibits may be tendered involving extremely explicit sexual or sensitive material.
- There are no circumstances where students should be present as observers during such proceedings. Further, exposing children and young people to the sexual behaviour of others, including the display of pornography may constitute reportable conduct under the Department's child protection guidelines policy and procedures.

## RISK MANAGEMENT

**A risk assessment is to be conducted and a risk management plan developed before approval can be given for any excursion.**

- The [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) and [Regulation](#) require principals and teachers organising excursions to use risk management to ensure the health and safety of students, staff and excursion volunteers. Risk management supports better decision making by contributing to a greater insight into the potential risks and their impacts.
- [Risk Management Process and Proforma](#) (Intranet access only) provides advice on the major steps in the risk management process as it relates to school excursions. A sample risk management plan proforma for excursions is also provided.
- Principals should ensure that individual health care plans for students with health care needs or disabilities include provision for the management of such conditions on excursions. A copy of this plan should be given to the teacher in charge of the excursion and its implications discussed before departure.
- The extent of pre-excursion planning will depend on the nature of the excursion and its location. In many situations prior experience of the site or a briefing from a responsible person with a sound knowledge of the site will suffice.
- However, a visit to the proposed excursion site is recommended when unfamiliar or potentially high risk activities are contemplated e.g. wilderness camping or field trips to inhospitable terrain. In these circumstances the pre-excursion visit should address issues such as access, injury prevention and emergency evacuation. Note also that staff involved in wilderness camping or field trips to inhospitable terrain or remote areas will require additional skills and competencies (see bushwalking section of [Sport and Physical Activity in Schools, Safe Conduct Guidelines](#)).
- Fundamental to effective excursion risk management is the communication of risk management plans to those who need to know, including staff and other adults on the excursion and appropriate school based staff members who may be instrumental in initiating emergency response.
- Teachers leading excursions involving sporting or physical activities should also consult the [Sport and Physical Activity in Schools, Safe Conduct Guidelines](#).
- For further information refer to the resource documents and risk management resource materials on the Occupational Health and Safety Directorate's [Safety Management System](#) (Intranet access only).

### **Special requirements including special protective equipment**

- Where a particular excursion activity requires special protective equipment or apparel (e.g. hard hats, helmets for snowboarding), these must be used. Staff and student safety must not be compromised. Students and staff on outdoor excursions should be encouraged to wear clothing that protects them from the sun, such broad brimmed hats and long sleeves and apply 30+ sunscreen. Students should also be encouraged to carry water in a non breakable container.
- Staff planning excursions which involve visits to industrial sites must establish the particular requirements relating to site induction by industry employees and the wearing of personal protective equipment, including footwear, by staff and students while on the site.

### **Swimming and water activities**

- Where any excursion involves swimming or water activities, principals must ensure that the eight elements of the *Water Survival Guidelines* (venue selection; parent/caregiver consent; staff supervision; risk management; staff induction; student induction; testing student proficiency; and classifying students) are all complied with.
- Parents must be asked to indicate the swimming ability of their children when giving consent for students to participate in excursions involving water activities. The determination of whether

or not a student will participate in swimming or water activities while on the excursion will not, however, depend solely on advice from parents.

- It will also be necessary to determine the aquatic proficiency of students prior to participation in unstructured aquatic activity. The foundation skills deemed critical to aquatic participation-water confidence; survival skills; safe water entry and exit; and elementary swimming skills will all need to be assessed.
  - This assessment must take place irrespective of parental or caregiver permission for the students to participate in the swimming or water activities.
- Principals and teachers organising excursions involving swimming and water activities should particularly consult the [Swimming and Water Safety section of Guidelines for the Safe Conduct of Sport and Physical Activity in Schools](#).
- Schools planning excursions involving aquatic activity other than swimming such as boating, sailing or board riding, should investigate requirements relating to the provision of personal flotation devices (such as lifejackets, buoyancy vests or buoyancy garments) and ensure all students and staff comply.

### **Additional activities**

- Students participating in an excursion must not be permitted to engage in additional or alternative activities, which were not originally scheduled in the program, and for which parental or caregiver approval would normally have been required (e.g. horse riding or water activities).

### **Risk Management associated with excursions to courts**

- Teachers planning excursions to courts are required to conduct a risk assessment with a view to ensuring students are not exposed to court hearings where the subject matter is inappropriate to their age, maturity or life experiences.
- Risk management plans should ensure that students are appropriately supervised throughout the excursion.

Students should be briefed about absenting themselves from courts if they inadvertently find themselves hearing what could be embarrassing or potentially traumatising information or where they discover they are acquainted with people before the court.
- Teachers accompanying students on excursions to courts should check the list of matters to be heard on the day of the excursion, consult with court officers and police in attendance, seek advice from their Principal where they are uncertain and, if necessary, restrict students from attending certain courts.

## **CONSENT**

### **Signed consent forms granting permission for students to participate in an excursion and a medical information form are to be obtained from parents or caregivers.**

- The fact that parents or caregivers consent to the participation of their child in an excursion should not be taken as removing the responsibility of school staff for taking all reasonable steps to ensure the particular activity is safe.
- Refer to [Parent or caregiver information and consent form](#) (Intranet access only) and school excursion [Medical Information Form](#) (Intranet access only)
- Other examples of consent forms for excursions involving physical activity can be found in the [Sport and Physical Activity in Schools, Safe Conduct Guidelines](#).
- For many excursions it will not be necessary to collect a new medical information form. Medical information held by the school should, however, be updated regularly and as required and take account of activities proposed for the excursion.
- Information identifying food or other allergies, special dietary needs and other health care related issues (including prior conditions such as medical procedures in the last 12 months), should be provided by parents or caregivers. This information will assist planning to support

students and minimise risks, including the risk of exposure to allergens for students at risk of anaphylactic reactions.

- Excursion consent forms do not create any waiver of rights by the parent or the caregiver in relation to their child. The main purpose of consent forms and information forms is to give enough detail to parents and caregivers to allow them to make an informed decision about whether their child should attend the excursion. It is also to assist the parent or caregiver to provide relevant information to the school about the child's care needs. If, following the return of an excursion consent form, the parent's wishes and consent are not clear to the school, it is incumbent on the school to clarify any unresolved issues prior to the student proceeding on the excursion. This is particularly important when the excursion involves relatively high risk activities such as swimming or water activities.
- The use of excursion consent forms covering multiple excursions should be limited. If excursions involving the same or very similar activities are to take place on a regular basis, e.g. each week for a term, one consent form may suffice. However, if a significant variation in the activities occurs, a separate consent form is required.
- As a general rule, students without a signed consent form from a parent or carer must not be permitted to participate in a school excursion.
- In exceptional circumstances, where it is not possible to obtain signed consent forms from parents or caregivers, oral approval can be sought. The principal must keep a written record of any oral approvals given by parents or caregivers.
- In some circumstances, consent forms may need to be translated into languages other than English. [Translations of a generic excursion consent form](#) are available in 34 languages other than English.
- When it is inappropriate to obtain parental or caregiver consent because of the age or living circumstances of the student, the consent can be sought from any other person considered appropriate by the principal. If no other person is available, written agreement to participate in the excursion must be obtained from the student. In particularly contentious situations, principals may wish to seek advice from Legal Services.
- If parents or caregivers do not permit participation of a student in an excursion, the school will make available a sound alternative educational experience which provides for similar learning outcomes, particularly where an assessment task relates to the excursion.
- Collection of personal information such as consent and medical information should be done consistent with the [Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act](#). Staff should refer to the Privacy notice in [Parent or caregiver information and consent form](#) (Intranet access only) and other [advice on privacy protection on the DET Legal Services website](#) (Intranet access only).

### **Unscheduled activities**

- In addition to excursions, occasions for **leaving the school grounds** for brief, local, spontaneous educational activities will arise from time to time. The value of such visits is recognised and on rare occasions there may be insufficient time to obtain the permission of parents or caregivers prior to the visit.
- Such visits may only take place at the discretion of the principal, who must ensure as far as possible the safety and welfare of students and be satisfied as to the value of the visit as an integral part of the school curriculum. It is expected that such local unscheduled "excursions" would not involve vehicular travel.

## **TRANSPORT**

### **Safe transport or a safe walking route is to be organised for excursions.**

- In some circumstances where the site of the excursion is close to the school, it will be appropriate for students and their supervisors to walk to the site. The decision to walk should

be preceded by a risk assessment and the route should be determined consistent with the objective of ensuring staff and student safety.

- Bus, rail and ferry services should be used for school excursions, wherever appropriate.

### **Bus and train travel**

- When hiring buses or coaches for excursions, schools should attempt to hire vehicles with seatbelts wherever practicable and particularly for long distance travel outside urban areas. Seatbelts must be worn on buses and coaches when they are available.
- In the case of large vehicles, the number of passengers must not exceed the number that the vehicle is licensed to carry.
- When organising an excursion by rail, principals should contact their local railway station concerning excursion concessions and other arrangements.
- If students with disabilities are participating in an excursion accessible transport will be required.
- Staff planning excursions involving bus and coach travel, including the use of school owned vehicles, should be aware of the national [heavy vehicle driver fatigue reform](#) program and its impact on travel time and driver availability.

### **Car travel**

- The transporting of students in the cars of staff members, parents, caregivers, volunteers and other students should only occur in those circumstances where there is no feasible option available to provide alternative transportation. This may only occur under the following conditions:
  - written permission from the parent(s) or caregiver(s) of the student(s) being transported is obtained
  - the driver is licensed and, if issued with a provisional licence, complies with any [relevant peer passenger conditions](#)
  - the vehicle is registered
  - the number of passengers in the vehicle does not exceed the number of seatbelts
  - current driver's licence and car registration details are sighted by the school prior to giving permission for students to be transported in the vehicle.
- Comprehensive insurance is not generally required. Nevertheless, comprehensive insurance is required if a member of staff is authorised to use his or her vehicle for official business and wishes to make a claim for the payment of mileage.
- Principals must ensure that all parents, caregivers or volunteers who transport students in cars complete a [Prohibited Employment Declaration](#) prior to the excursion.
- For further information on road safety and student drivers, see the [Road Safety Education, Driver Education and Training Policy](#).

### **Air travel**

- Principals may approve air travel in Australia to enable students and teachers to travel to distant centres. Principals may also grant approval for use of aircraft for short flights for specific curriculum activities. Preference must be given to scheduled airline flights over chartered flights.
- Where approval is given for short flights, principals must satisfy themselves that the operator carries relevant public liability insurance.
- For insurance arrangements refer to section on 'Insurance Arrangements' below

## **STUDENT BEHAVIOUR**

**Students must behave appropriately at all times on excursions.**

- Students on excursions interact with the public and are representatives of their school and community. Prior to excursions, they should be reminded of expected standards of behaviour and the application of the school's discipline code.
- Policies and procedures relating to [student discipline in government schools](#) also apply while students are on excursions. The *school discipline policy* applies outside of school hours and off school premises because there is a “clear and close connection” between the school, the students and the activity in which they are engaged.

### **Students must behave appropriately when animals are encountered on excursions.**

- Students also should be briefed on appropriate behaviour around animals. Responsible behaviour involves not interfering with the animal. Injury is most likely to occur if the animal panics and either attacks or attempts to flee the situation. If people remain calm, the risk of injury to either students or the animal or both will be lessened.
- Appropriate touching of animals, where there is educational value in the activity, should be supervised by teachers, parents, caregivers or volunteers.
- Further information can be found in the [Animal Welfare Policy](#) and the [Animal Welfare Guidelines for Teachers](#).
- School excursions to abattoirs are prohibited owing to the risk of contracting Q Fever.

## **ACCOUNTING AND ADMINISTRATION RELATING TO EXCURSIONS**

### **Accounting for Excursion Funds**

- The accounting requirements for excursions over one day are outlined in Section 8.7 of the [School Manual on Financial Management](#) (Intranet access only). Reference should be made to Sections 4.2 and 4.3 for other relevant accounting requirements.
- For information concerning excursions and GST, refer to [Money Matters 2, Part 2: The New Tax System: GST Guidelines for Schools, Chapter 4: Excursions](#). (*Intranet access only*).

### **Reporting of Incidents Occurring while on Excursions**

- Staff leading school excursions are required to report incidents occurring while on excursion. In broad, such incidents are those which cause disruption to the excursion; or creates danger or risk that could significantly affect individuals participating in the excursion; or impacts on the effective operation of the excursion; or attracts negative media attention or a negative public profile for the school or the Department of Education and Training; or is an incident which WorkCover describes as a “serious incident” which must be reported by law.
- Prior to the excursion, principals should ensure that staff leading the excursion are familiar with the Department’s [Incident Reporting Policy and Procedures](#), (*Intranet access only*).

### **Retention of Excursion Records**

- Principals must ensure that a record of all excursions, including overseas excursions, is maintained. The record must include a copy of the risk management plan, any advice given to parents or caregivers, costs and approval letters and administrative, supervision and travel details.
- Regional offices must also ensure that a database of approved overseas excursions is maintained.
- Except in the case of injury to a student or third party or property damage, records relating to excursions can be disposed of in accordance with the Department's document [Functional Retention and Disposal Authority](#) (Intranet access only).
- In the event of an injury to a student or third party or property damage during the course of an excursion, all records relating to the particular student as well as any general information about the excursion must be retained until the injured party reaches age 25, or for seven years, whichever is the greater.

## Benefits, Subsidies and Gratuities Associated with Excursions

- The principal must be satisfied that the teachers or executive staff as organisers of the excursion do not receive benefits in excess of what would be considered acceptable. Excursion organisers who have an actual or potential conflict of interests (pecuniary or non-pecuniary) should disclose that interest to their supervisor who will determine what action will follow.
- Reference should be made to the Department's [Code of Conduct](#).
- Excursions should not provide the opportunity for organisers to gain extra customer loyalty scheme points, rewards or commissions. All sources of funding, gratuity or subsidy, including free airline tickets, donations, rewards or commissions, must be disclosed in the submission for approval. Donations, rewards, etc., must be applied to the relevant event and cannot be used for personal purposes.

## Insurance Arrangements Relating to Excursions

- Where intrastate, interstate and overseas excursions involve travel by air, parents or caregivers should arrange travel insurance for students, including appropriate cover for personal property. Volunteers, parents and caregivers who accompany staff and students on these excursions should also arrange travel insurance, including appropriate cover for personal property. Proof of that cover must be provided to the principal prior to the excursion.
- The Department will not generally accept liability for the loss of, or damage to students', parents', caregivers' or volunteers' personal property brought on excursions or for personal items purchased while on excursions.
- Staff members accompanying students on excursions are considered to be "on duty" and are covered by the Department's insurance arrangements. Information concerning insurance arrangements for excursions is available by contacting the Administration Policy Unit, [Administrative Services Directorate](#). (Intranet access only).
- Staff organising school excursions should establish whether the school has *Ambulance School Cover*. Schools with such cover are assured that if a student has an accident or falls ill whilst at school or on an organised school activity (such as an approved excursion) and requires the ambulance service, that neither the school nor the parents will be responsible for the payment of the ambulance account. For interstate excursions, the NSW Ambulance Service has reciprocal health care arrangements with some other Australian states **but not all**. For further information contact the Ambulance Service of NSW on telephone 1300 655 200 (toll free)

## BRIEFING STUDENTS PRIOR TO EXCURSIONS

Prior to any excursion, students should be briefed on the school's expectations of their behaviour.

- Students should also be briefed about their right to be safe and protected, about protective strategies and of avenues for support should concerns arise. Organising teachers should take time to work with groups of students to consider unexpected situations and risks that might occur during the excursion and to discuss strategies, consistent with the risk management plan, for eliminating or controlling risks. Students should also be given strategies for seeking help and regaining safety.
- Individual students with particular health care needs should be briefed about how these needs will be met during the excursion, especially where the arrangements differ from standard practice at school.
- Students participating in excursions to communities which are culturally different to their own should be briefed on cultural sensitivities and appropriate communication in cross-cultural contexts.
- Students should also be briefed on appropriate behaviour around animals.

## BILLETING OF STUDENTS ON EXCURSION

- Billeting, which involves students staying overnight in the homes of volunteer host families, and sometimes referred to as “homestays”, is a component of some excursions.
- While most homestays are a rewarding and successful experience, students can be placed in situations where they are unsafe or are vulnerable to abusive behaviour. It is therefore important that teachers planning overnight, extended or overseas excursions should recognise their special duty of care for student safety and welfare in these circumstances. They should take all necessary steps to minimise any risks to students.
- Processes to screen the accommodation and the billeting families may be difficult to arrange. In these circumstances alternative accommodation may be more appropriate.
- Parents or caregivers agreeing to billet students should complete the *Acknowledgment of Billeting Conditions by Billeting Families* and the *Undertaking to Provide a Billet* form.
- This is a sensitive issue given that billeting relies on the goodwill of host families offering to accommodate visiting students, usually without financial compensation. The majority of parents will appreciate the obligation that the Department has in relation to the welfare of students and the measures that need to be in place to fulfil that obligation.
- If the wellbeing or safety of a student is at risk, or there is a suspicion that this could be so, the student should be relocated to another approved accommodation arrangement and the student's parents informed that this has occurred.
- Principals must ensure that all staff have received training in child protection and are aware of the need to be vigilant in all matters relating to the safety and welfare of students involved in billeting. Principals should also refer to the *Good Practice in Billeting*.

## EVALUATION

This policy will be evaluated as the need arises and inline with current DET policies and documentation.

DET Reference: Excursions Policy - 28 May 2009 – PD/2004/0010/V04

## School excursions: Parent or caregiver information and consent forms

### Instructions:

This document provides wording to create an information form and permission slip for use with a range of excursions. This is the minimum information required. However, depending on the nature and specific activities of each excursion, further advice and details may need to be included.

For many excursions it will not be necessary to collect a new medical information form. Medical information held by the school should, however, be updated as required and take account of activities proposed for the excursion.

Section A provides a simple information form that will be of use for most excursions.

Section B provides wording to cater for a range of activities that may occur on excursion, and advice on the privacy implications of the collection of personal data. These sections should be copied as required and inserted into Section A.

**Section A**

Dear parent or caregiver,

's class will be going on an excursion to on to .

This excursion has been planned to supplement the following work being done in the classroom:

The cost of the excursion is \$

The class will depart from at and return to at

Travel will be by .

The staff member with emergency care training is

The staff member with CPR training is

Accompanying staff are

**Insert as appropriate:**

- **Overnight excursion advice**
- **Water activities advice**
- **Travel insurance advice**
- **Privacy advice – whenever personal information is sought the privacy advice must be included.**
- **Overseas excursion advice, including travel, itinerary, accommodation and supervision details.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Excursion coordinator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

-----✂----- Please detach and return to by -----

I do / do not consent to ..... participating in an excursion to on .

My son / daughter has the following special needs (please provide full details and include any relevant medical details)

I give / do not give permission for my child to receive medical treatment in case of emergency.

**Insert as appropriate:**

- **Overnight excursions – response**
- **Water activities – response**
- **Travel insurance - response**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Section B

### Overnight excursions - advice

Accommodation will be at .....

Travel will be by .....

The group will be supervised by .....

*Additional information (consider advice on the number of students and teachers, protective clothing or equipment)*

.....  
.....

### Overnight excursions - response

I understand that my son / daughter will stay overnight at .....

.....

### Water or swimming activities - advice

The excursion will involve the following water or swimming activities: .....

These activities will take place at: .....

The school will provide the following flotation devices to students who may require assistance in the water: .....

### Water or swimming activities - response

In relation to the proposed water or swimming activities, I advise that my child is a: (*please tick one*)

strong swimmer     average swimmer     poor swimmer     non-swimmer

I advise that my child requires the following flotation device to assist him/her in the water:.....

I undertake to provide this device so that my child can participate in the excursion. Yes / No  
I give / do not give permission for my child to participate in the water or swimming activities.

### Travel insurance - response

I have arranged travel insurance with .....

A copy of that policy is attached.

### Privacy notice

**Note:** A Privacy notice must appear on all forms issued by the Department used for collecting personal information. A sample *Privacy advice* notice is below for use with consent forms. Principals will need to fill in the blanks to make this relevant to each particular excursion. A Privacy notice will also need to be included on any electronic personal information data collection system.

For further information on privacy and the *Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* please see <http://detwww.det.nsw.edu.au/directorates/leglserv/privacy2/privacy.htm> .

### Privacy - advice

The information provided on [...*date*...] by [...*name*...] is being obtained for the purpose of ascertaining relevant medical information, requirements and other health care related needs about [...*student name*...] who is currently enrolled at the school and who may participate in school excursions, sporting activities or other educational or school activities conducted by or in conjunction with [...*name of school*...].

It will be used by officers of the NSW Department of Education and Training to assist planning, to support students, and to minimise risks when conducting school excursions, sporting or other school activities.

Other persons or agencies that may be provided with this information include, but are not limited to, volunteers and members of external organisations who join with the school or are otherwise involved in the planning or delivery of the excursion, sporting or other school activity; and persons that may be called upon to provide health care treatment or other assistance during or as a consequence of such excursions or activities. Provision of this information is not required by law. However, a failure to provide the information may mean that your child can not participate in a particular excursion or school activity. In such circumstances the school will make available a sound alternative educational experience.

Provision of this information will significantly assist the school in planning a safer educational activity. It will be stored securely. If you have any concerns about provision of this information, please contact the school principal to discuss further. You may correct any personal information provided at any time by contacting the school office.

**Medical information form**

The information provided on ..... by ..... is being obtained for the purpose of .....

It will be used by the NSW Department of Education and Training for .....

[If applicable] Other persons and/or agencies that will be provided with this information are ..... for the purpose of .....

Provision of this information is required by law / voluntary. It will be stored securely.

[If applicable] If you do not provide all or any of this information then .....

You may correct any personal information provided at any time by contacting .....

Student name: ..... Class: .....

**Parent or caregiver contact details**

Name: .....

Address: .....

Home phone: ..... Work: ..... Mobile: .....

**Doctor contact details**

Name: .....

Address: .....

Doctor's telephone: 1. .... 2. ....

**Emergency contact(s) details (nominated by the parent or caregiver as alternate contact)**

1. Name: ..... Phone: .....

2. Name: ..... Phone: .....

**List existing medical conditions or illnesses (include asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, allergies etc.). Outline the treatment for each.**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Medical conditions or illnesses continued**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Outline special dietary needs including possible reaction to inappropriate diet**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Medication(s) to be administered during the excursion. Include name of medication, instructions for administration, time of administration, and any possible reactions**

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Signature: ..... Date: .....

Please return this form by: .....

## RELATED DOCUMENTS AND ADVICE

### Related Documents

Depending on the type of excursion, the following documents will contain useful guidance and advice:

[Sport & Physical Activity, Safe Conduct Guidelines](#)

[Student Health in NSW Public Schools: A summary and consolidation of Policy](#)

[Supporting Students: Student Health](#)

[Supporting Students: Individual students who need help with health issues](#)

[Supporting Students: Developing and implementing individual health care plans for students with more complex needs](#)

[Supporting Students: Anaphylaxis](#)

[Schools policies and procedures: Child Protection](#)

[Occupational Health and Safety: Emergency Management Guidelines \(Intranet access only\)](#)

[Occupational Health and Safety: Safety Management System: Excursions](#) (Intranet access only)

[Occupational Health and Safety: Safety Management System: Risk Management](#) (Intranet access only)

[Occupational Health and Safety: Safety Management System: Incident Management](#) (Intranet access only)

[Animal Welfare Policy – Schools](#)

[Welfare of Students while Engaged in Activities conducted under the Auspices of the School](#)

### Advice

[Legal Services Directorate](#) (Intranet access only)

[Occupational Health and Safety Directorate](#) (Intranet access only)

[School Sport Unit](#)

[School and Regional Financial Operations Unit](#) (Intranet access only)

[Employment Screening Unit](#) (Intranet access only)

[Multicultural Programs Unit](#) (Intranet access only)

[Records Management Unit](#) (Intranet access only)

[School Safety and Response Unit](#) (Intranet access only)

[Student Welfare Directorate](#) (Intranet access only)

# Sherwood Ridge Public School

## Variation to Routine Policy and Procedures

Excursions and Incursions

**Date modified: September 2018**

**ALL** excursions and visits must be approved by the Principal before transport and excursions can be booked by organising teachers or excursion information, letters and permission notes are sent home to parents.

### **Procedures:**

Please follow the procedures below. Most but not all may be applicable to the event you are organising.

### **For approval- Proposed Variation to Routine (Part 1)**

- Proposed Variation to Routine organised where possible **the term before** on a proposed Variation to Routine plan.
- Proposed dates are checked against the calendar and with the Principal to ensure there are no clashes.
- Submit Proposal (Part 1) after being signed by supervisor to the principal for approval.
- Principal will record date on a display in the principal's office.

### **For action- Variation to Routine Application (Part 2) and Checklist**

- Application form is then returned to the organising teacher to complete Variation to Routine Application (Part 2) and Checklist (Part 3).
- Copy of the Variation to Routine Application (Part 1 & Part 2) is given to the office.
- Organising teacher fills in and submits bus request to office if required (Purple form near sign on desk). Priority must be to request buses with seat belts in the first instance, if unavailable, standard buses are ok.
- Organising teacher performs a **Risk Assessment** and completes a Risk Management Form which is then attached to the Variation to Routine form. This is to be given to the principal for approval **before** being distributed to all staff attending the excursion.
- Organising teacher completes **Information note** with **Permission Note** and submits to the office for editing and then office to Principal for approval. Notes to Parents, Medical Information Forms and permission notes should be modelled on the formats attached. Take particular note where **swimming/water** activities are involved.
- Permission notes need to be finalised and signed by principal by the Monday of the last week of each term to be sent out with the invoices.
- Notes will be distributed with invoices during week one of each term.
- All notes to be uploaded to website by office staff.
- Staff are responsible for the collation and recording of permission notes as they come in.
- Organising Teacher notifies **Canteen** and all **relevant staff** and arranges for **playground duty** swaps for participating teachers where relevant. No RFF swaps are to be made.
- If travel is by **private car** a copy of current Comprehensive Car Insurance must be put on File and current drivers licence sighted by organising staff.
- Organising teacher checks that all adults involved in assisting with the event/activity have current Child Protection "Police Check" filed at the office.
- **Variation to Routine Checklist Register** completed and submitted to the principal at least two weeks ahead. Copies to be given to all executive, significant others group and the office.
- If staff are aware of families who are having difficulties making payments, they need to advise office staff.

## Procedures for excursion and incursion payments

1. **CLOSING DATE** for acceptance of excursion money is **10** school days before the excursion. All notes must clearly indicate the cut-off date and state **NO LATE PAYMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED. This to be strictly enforced by all staff.** Exceptional circumstances to be referred to the Principal or Deputy Principal.
2. The permission notes will be stamped "PAID" with the date, as they are entered into OASIS. If teachers receive a note with no "paid" stamp it must be sent to the office for immediate follow-up.
3. Each morning staff to check if any students have notes or money in their bags. Staff to remind students it needs to go to the office immediately.
4. If a student requires change, office staff will post a message on SENTRAL. Students will be sent to the office by the classroom teacher to collect the money. Students will be required to sign for the receipt of any money given to them.
5. The office will receipt all payments and return the permission notes to the class teachers.
6. Excursion coordinators will provide relevant class teachers with a class list, clearly indicating the following:
  - the name of the event,
  - payment cut-off date
  - notes returned
  - details of any medical conditions
  - have ticked the "do/do not give permission for medical assistance".
  - Individual class teachers to complete these details for their own class.
7. Class teachers are to chase up missing notes/payment **at least 4 days** before closing date.
8. Four days before final payment date the office will print off copies of the individual class reports "Students not Paid" and give it to the staff involved.
9. The excursion will be cancelled if minimum numbers are not reached 10 days prior to the excursion.
10. Money is to be paid at the office in the box provided. No money is to be sent through the class roll.