



Excursions Policy

School excursions are structured learning experiences provided by, or under the auspices of, the school which are conducted external to the school site. The policy and procedures are directed at managing risks.

1. 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 The department will not accept responsibility for privately arranged tours.

3. Responsibilities

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.

4. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements

4.1 Directors, Public Schools NSW are required to monitor school compliance with this policy.

4.2 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.

4.3 Principals are to report controversial issues or incidents occurring while staff and students are on excursions, consistent with the [Incident Reporting Policy](#) (intranet access only).

5. Implementation Strategies

5.1 Supervision

Before the planned excursion is undertaken the principal must be satisfied that all precautions have been taken for the safety of the participants and that supervision will be adequate in relation to the number of students, their maturity, anticipated behaviour and the activities planned.

Details of teacher/student ratios and the number of parent/caregiver helpers will be required on the "Variation from Routine Form".

A WHS risk assessment must be completed before the excursion will be approved.

It is mandatory that a member of staff who has undertaken emergency training accompany **all** student excursions. Emergency care needs to be updated every three years.

In addition, overnight excursions and sports activities involving water activities are to be accompanied by a staff member with current training in cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and emergency care. CPR needs to be updated every 12 months.

5.2 Transport

Public transport and private bus companies should be used for school excursions wherever possible. If the distance being travelled is over 20km then a coach with seatbelts is used rather than a bus.

In exceptional circumstances (e.g. for small groups) consideration may be given to the use of private motor vehicles. In such cases the following applies:

- written permission from the parents of the student being transported by private vehicle
- the driver must have completed a Prohibited Declaration Form
- the driver must provide copies of the following to the school office: current driver's licence, motor vehicle registration and car insurance
- the number of passengers must not exceed the number of seatbelts in the vehicle
- two or more students must travel in each vehicle at the one time
- students sit in the rear of the vehicle where possible
- risk assessments must be carried out in line with the school OHS policy prior to the transportation of students by private vehicle

5.3 Special Requirements

Where any excursion involves swimming or water activities, parents must indicate the swimming ability of their child(ren) when giving consent for students to participate in the excursion. If parents indicate students are poor or non-swimmers and no flotation devices are available for use by the students, the principal will assess whether such students should participate in the swimming or water activities of the excursion. This assessment must take place irrespective of parental permission for the student(s) to participate in the swimming or water activities.

5.4 Mobile Phones

Students are discouraged from taking mobile phones on excursions. Any contact with parents/caregivers can be organised with the assistance of the supervising teacher.

6. Organisational Procedures

6.1 School Procedures – The following procedures are to operate for excursions arranged for students of this school:

1. Excursions initiated by the class teacher should be discussed first with the appropriate supervisor and/or the principal, before students and parents are informed.
2. It is the responsibility of the teacher(s) initiating the excursion to justify the excursion in terms of its value as a relevant learning experience for students.
3. The planning of an excursion should take place sufficiently far in advance of the excursion date to enable:-

- the formal requirements of approval
 - WHS risk assessment for excursions
 - an adequate program of preparatory lessons
 - list of those attending the excursion
4. Filed documentation of an excursion should include the following:-
 - Variation to Routine Form which incorporates the formal approval by the principal
 - WHS risk assessment and management plans
 - a copy of the letter to parents outlining costs etc.
 - transport quotes
 5. An excursion proposal initiated outside of the school e.g. an invitation to “send a small group of students to ...” should be considered on its merits, with particular attention to its relevance to the current program and the number of students who may participate.

6.2 Organising teacher’s responsibility once an excursion has been approved

1. Provide supervision to ensure that:
 - student safety is paramount at all times
 - medication is collected from the office for those with Health Plans
 - student behaviour does not bring discredit to the school
 - student dress is appropriate to the nature and location of the excursion
 - sun safe aspects of dress are considered and accounted for
 - supervision of pupils on an excursion commences at departure and continues until the last child has left the teacher’s care after returning.
2. The number of adults accompanying an excursion should be considered carefully, with regard to suitability, safety factors and the nature and location of the excursion.
3. The selection of parents accompanying an excursion must first be discussed with the supervisor and/or principal and must meet with the approval of the principal.
4. Both male and female adults should accompany an excursion group if possible.
5. Teachers accompanying an excursion must ensure that they are aware of any students who will need to take medication or who have allergies. Teachers should familiarise themselves with medical details and bring emergency contact details of all students on the excursion.
6. A first aid kit must be taken on each outing. The organising teacher is responsible for checking the kit prior to departure to ensure its contents are complete.
7. Students may participate in an excursion only with the parental consent for that specific excursion.
8. A separate consent form is required for each child on the excursion.
9. If parents do not permit participation of a student in an excursion the school will make available a sound alternative educational experience.
10. If a teacher suspects that parental consent is withheld because of the cost of an excursion, the case should be discussed with the supervisor and/or the principal. Student Assistance Scheme funds may be a source of supplementary funding for individual cases.
11. All medical forms and permission notes must be checked prior to the departure of the excursion to see that all contingencies have been considered.
12. It is the responsibility of the person organizing the excursion to inform all persons affected. i.e. scripture teachers, librarian, R.R.F. teacher, playground roster organiser
13. The bus will have been ordered but the teacher should confirm this with the school office staff 24 hours prior to departure.

7. HIGH SUPPORT NEED STUDENTS – EXCURSION PROCEDURES

All planning and guidelines already covered in this Excursion Policy are equally applicable for High Support Needs students; however, extra emphasis on transport, students' individual needs and level of assistance is required.

7.1 Risk Management:

- Traditional excursions and camps need to be evaluated in light of each individual's high support needs
- Risk management procedures apply as in all excursions but for students with high needs the valuation will need to include whether it is safe to take the student on a particular excursion/camp.
- Parents accompanying their child on the excursion need to be considered if the risk management poses concerns for safety in any aspect of the excursion/camp.
- If the risk management indicates the student should not attend the excursion/camp then normal classroom activities need to be provided in an alternative class for that student.

7.2 Preparation:

- Name tags must be prepared for all students.
- Arrangements must be made for every student to have an adult helper, preferably persons already familiar with the students.
- Safe/approved transport must be organised.
- All helpers must be briefed on the individual special needs of the student they are assisting, eg: if student is prone to seizures, if student has a tendency to "run off" and requires full supervision, Health Plans known (anaphylaxis/asthma etc)

7.3 Transport:

- Special arrangement with students' regular drivers (particularly for safe wheelchair transport) or
- Special arrangements with parents made for them to transport their child to and from the excursion venue on the day.

7.4 Special Considerations:

- Due to the extra costs of transportation to parents, careful selection of excursion and venue is recommended.
- Teacher and aide should travel with students if possible.
- Venue must have disabled toilet facilities and easy access.
- All personal needs requirements such as toileting and dressing can only be attended to by the teacher or teacher's aide for privacy and dignity of students.