

# EXCURSIONS

## POLICY

### Rationale

The school's excursion program enables students to further their learning and social skills development in a non-school setting. Excursions complement, and are an important aspect of the educational programs offered at our school.

An excursion is an activity organised by a school during which students leave the school grounds to engage in educational activities. Adventure activities are included in this definition regardless of whether they occur outside the school grounds or not. This includes camps and sport, but does not include work experience.

### Aims

- To reinforce, complement and extend learning opportunities beyond the classroom.
- To develop an understanding that learning is not limited to school, and that valuable and powerful learning takes place in the real world.
- To ensure safety of the participants.
- To ensure buses have adequate seatbelts when travelling over 80 km/h

### Policy

Principals are responsible for the conduct of all excursions and must ensure:

- Excursions are planned, approved and conducted in accordance with Department policy and requirements.
- An online notification of school activity form is completed at least three weeks prior to the activity using the Student Activity Locator (SAL)

NOTE: The SAL should be used by all Victorian schools. Non-government schools should log on using 'NG' for the user ID. See the SAL user guide for further information

- Compliance with the Safety Guidelines for Education Outdoors, which are mandatory for excursions requiring school council approval

**Important:** Principals, teachers, school councillors and others involved in school excursions, must anticipate the possibility of litigation following an incident or injury. They must be prepared for a detailed examination of their planning, actions and the curriculum role of any activity.

## **Excursion Planning Requirements**

While the degree of planning involved will depend on the risks involved, the conduct of any excursion or activity should take into account the following:

- Educational purpose of the excursion and its contribution to the curriculum
- Department approval requirements for excursions and staff travel
- Maintenance of full records, including documentation of the planning process
- Suitability of the environment and/or venue for the excursion
- Informed consent from parents or carers
- Adequate student and staff medical information
- Student preparation and behavior
- Requirements for any adventure activities (these involve greater than normal risk - there are additional considerations associated with these activities)

## **Emergency and risk management**

- Assessment of excursion risks
- Procedures in the event of an emergency
- Arrangements are in place if the excursion needs to be cancelled, recalled, or altered (for example: severe weather conditions, changes to DFAT travel advice, or students returning early due to illness/serious misbehaviour)
- Completion of an online notification of school activity form three weeks prior to the activity using the Student Activity Locator - see Department resources below
- First Aid requirements

## **Cancellations or alterations**

- Principals should inform parents that any costs associated with the student returning from an excursion early due to illness or serious misbehaviour are the responsibility of the parent.
- Parents should be advised of possible cancellations or alterations, and any cancellation fees imposed on the parents by third parties.
- With respect to arrangements between the school and third parties, principals should:
  - a) carefully negotiate terms and conditions with third parties (e.g. travel agents, travel insurance companies, camp providers, specialist instructors, expedition providers) prior to accepting arrangements
  - b) ensure the terms of any travel insurance offered to the school by the third party are satisfactory.

## **Staffing and supervision**

There must be sufficient staff to provide appropriate and effective supervision the experience, qualifications and skills of each staff member (including volunteers, instructors, etc) to allow them to provide effective supervision in general and for planned activities (as applicable)

There must be appropriate levels of supervision in view of the activities undertaken and students involved.

### **Transportation requirements**

- Public transport should be used if practicable
- Transport authorities should be consulted on appropriate travel times and at least a fortnight's notice of travel provided
- Excursions that run late, failing to meet times agreed to with private bus operators, are likely to incur significant costs.

### **Other requirements**

- Communication requirements and equipment
- Staff and students must have appropriate clothing and personal equipment.
- Group or technical equipment must be in good condition and suitable for the activities undertake.
- Continuous instruction will be provided for students remaining at the school during the absence of staff accompanying the excursion
- The regional director will be informed if an excursion leaves the school unoccupied
- Any information which has been provided by specialists in the activities proposed

### **Requirements for interstate or overseas excursions**

Where external providers have been engaged to deliver specific activities or programs for students, or provide other services, the school retains responsibility for its students. The duty of care of the school staff to students cannot be delegated to a third party

The excursion meets the requirements of any school-level policy or procedures

For detailed information on the requirements above see Related policies, and Department resources below.

### **Implementation**

An excursion is defined as any activity beyond the school grounds.

Categories of excursion:

- a) Local excursion where travel is by foot
- b) General excursion where travel involves motorised transport
- c) Overnight camps (refer to Camp Policy)
- d) Excursions involving adventure activities (relevant to PEEP)

- A permission notice covering parental consent to attend all local excursions to be conducted during the year will be distributed in February of each year
- School Council will determine an 'Excursions Levy' each year. Parents can bulk pay for the year's excursions or pay for individual excursions as they occur. Parents who are eligible for the Camp, Sports and Excursion Fund (CSEF) can use this towards paying for excursions. Schools are

required to use the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) payment for expenses relating to Camps, Sport and/or Excursions for the benefit of the eligible student.

- The annual allowance of \$125 for the CSEF is paid directly to the school.
- A designated 'Teacher in Charge' will coordinate each excursion.
- The designated Teacher in Charge of each excursion will ensure that all excursions, transport arrangements and excursion activities comply with DEECD guidelines. The "Notification of School Activity" form will be completed and forwarded to the DEECD (if required) three weeks prior to the excursion departure date via email.
- All endeavours will be made not to exclude students for financial reasons. Parents experiencing financial difficulty, who wish for their children to attend an excursion, will be required to discuss their individual situation with the Principal. Decisions relating to alternative payment arrangements will be made by the Principal on a case-by-case basis.
- All families will be given sufficient time to make payments for excursions. Parents will be sent notices before the excursion date reminding them of the need to finalise payment.
- Office staff will be responsible for managing and monitoring the payments made by parents and will provide classroom teachers with detailed records on a regular basis.
- The school will provide a mobile phone and a first-aid kit for all excursions.
- Prior to any child attending an excursion, parents/guardians must have provided to the school a signed permission form which includes a contact phone number of parent on the day of the excursion and must have paid the costs involved.
- Information will be provided to all parents of non-English speaking families in a manner that allows them to provide an informed consent to their children attending excursions upon request.
- Copies of completed Permission forms must be carried by excursion staff at all times.
- A staff member will be in attendance at school when the children are returning from any excursion out of school hours. The Teacher in Charge will communicate with this person with regards the anticipated return time.
- If parents are required to assist, selection will be entirely at the discretion of the Teacher in Charge.
- When deciding on which parents will assist, the Teacher in Charge will take into account, amongst other factors
  1. Any relevant skills the parents have to offer. eg. first aid etc
  2. The need to include both male and female parents.
  3. The special needs of particular students.
- Parents selected to assist in any excursion may be required to provide their own transport and/or the cost of their attendance.
- Only children who have displayed sensible, reliable behaviour at school will be invited to participate in school excursions. Parents will be notified if a child is in danger of losing their invitation to participate in an excursion due to poor behaviour at school. The decision to exclude a student will be made by the Principal, in consultation with the classroom teacher and the Teacher in Charge.
- Parents will be requested to collect their child from an excursion if their child exhibits behaviour that is considered unacceptable or their child is unwell.

- An excursion proforma will be completed and submitted to the Principal prior to departure and will include:
  1. The educational aims and objectives of the excursion.
  2. The names of all adults attending and their expertise and experience.
  3. Travel arrangements and costs.
  4. Venue details and an itinerary of events.
  5. Procedures followed to ensure the safety of the children

**Evaluation:**

- This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council in....

**April 2019**