

POLICY: EXCURSIONS



QUALITY AREA 2: CHILDREN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY

AIM

Excursions are a valuable experience for children, families and staff of the Pre-School community. Excursions provide the opportunity to expand and enhance children's experiences, explore different environments and engage in meaningful ways to connect to the community in which they live.

Excursions require planning and risk management to ensure that best learning experience, safety and wellbeing of all who participate in the excursion activity. Our Pre-School is committed to providing excursions that are well planned, provide meaningful experiences and ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children at all times.

GOALS

- Make excursions a part of the program of education and care.
- Plan for excursions with careful consideration of the safety of children and adults.
- Carry out excursions only where full documentation and permissions have been completed and obtained.
- Undertake full risk assessments, consideration of value of education excursions, and plan for first aid requirements.

STRATEGIES

Planning and Preparations:

- Maximise both children's developmental experiences and their safety.
- Reflect the age, capacity and interests of the children.
- Ensure they are properly supervised and conducted in a safe manner.
- Excursions are conducted with fully informed written parental permission.

⇒ **Linked to ACECQA National Quality Standards: Elements 2.3.2, 7.3.5**

⇒ **Education and Care Services National Regulation 2011: 101, 102**

All Excursions will be thoroughly researched to ensure:

- Supervision is adequate so children cannot be separated from the group.
- Access to hazardous equipment and environments are minimised.
- There is adequate access to food, drink and other facilities (toilets, hand washing etc.).
- Consideration is given to the mobility and supervision requirements of children with additional needs.
- That adequate sun and shade protection is available.

When planning for an excursion staff will:

- Assess the requirements for the excursion.
- Conduct a risk assessment.
- Book transport to venues.
- Make alternative arrangements for adverse weather conditions.
- Inform families of the details of the excursion including destination, objectives and outcomes, and what the child should bring.
- Provide parents or legal guardians with an excursion permission form to complete to authorise their child to participate on the excursion.
- Collect completed permission forms for each child attending the excursion.
- Request additional adult participation on the excursion where required.
- Arrange for a suitably equipped first aid kit (including Epi-Pen, asthma medication and spacer) and mobile phone to be taken on the excursion.
- Educators must make alternate arrangements for any children who are not attending the excursion, and ensure that any dialogue or pre-planning for the excursion does not alienate such children from social networks.
- Additional factors need to be considered in the planning of excursions for children with additional needs. Where possible, our service will uphold the right for all children to access all excursions and engage in meaningful ways while on excursions.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The Nominated Supervisor will:

Ensure a risk assessment is conducted prior to any excursion to identify and assess the risk the excursion may pose to the safety, health and wellbeing of any child whilst on the excursion, and will specify how the service will manage any risks identified.

The risk assessment conducted will consider:

- Destination and duration of the excursion.
- Potential water hazards or any hazard associated with water based activities.
- Transport to and from destination.
- Number of educators, responsible persons, and children involved.
- Proposed activities.
- Items to be taken on the excursion eg: mobile phone, emergency contact list, first aid kit, sunscreen, children's medication (asthma or epi-pen).

If the excursion is a regular occurrence a risk assessment will only be carried out once, provided the circumstances around the excursion have not changed in any way since the initial risk assessment was conducted (for eg. If the children walk down to the library to borrow and return books on a fortnightly basis)

The Nominated Supervisor will also appoint a Certified Supervisor to be in charge of the excursion.

AUTHORISATIONS FOR EXCURSIONS

The Nominated Supervisor will ensure:

For all excursions parents or legal guardians will be given an excursion permission form with full details of the excursion including:

- Date, description, duration and destination of proposed excursion.
- Method of transport to be used.
- Reason for the excursion, and proposed activities to be conducted on the excursion.
- The anticipated adult: child ratios – outlining number of educators and staff and other adults attending.
- A statement that a risk assessment has been prepared and is available at the service for parents to view.

If the excursion is a regular outing, authorisation is required once in a two month period. All parents or legal guardians will be asked to sign permission forms for regular excursions on enrolment forms and at the beginning of each subsequent year.

No child will be taken on an excursion unless written permission from parents or legal guardian has been received.

FAMILIES AND VOLUNTEERS

Families will be encouraged to participate in excursions to assist in maintaining suitable child/staff ratios. If the parent needs to bring their child's sibling because they cannot find suitable care, the siblings must be included in the ratios.

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If additional adults are required volunteers will be invited. Volunteers will be mature, responsible people who are aware of the hazards and responsibilities of taking a group of children out of the service.

Family members/volunteers will not be left in sole care of children and must be supervised by an educator at all times.

All volunteers/family members' details will be entered into the appropriate staff record for that day and sign an attendance sheet.

Exemptions: (Part 4, Clause 20 of the Child Protection (Working With Children) Regulation 2013.

Volunteering by a parent or close relatives

- Of a child in activities for the child's school, early education service or other educational institution; except where the work is part of a formal mentoring program or involves intimate personal care of children with a disability
- With a team, program or other activity in which the child usually participates or is a team member; except where the work is part of a formal mentoring program or involves personal care of children with a disability.

TRANSPORT AND TRAFFIC

Safety of children will be considered in the choice of route and mode of transport. Our service will follow all applicable NSW road rules as well as the Kids and Traffic best practice recommendations for transporting young children safely in buses. Every reasonable precaution will be taken to protect children from harm and any hazard likely to cause injury.

Educators will ensure children obey road rules and cross roads at a crossing or lights where available. Educators will remain vigilant to ensure no child runs ahead or lags behind the group.

SUPERVISION

Supervision on excursions will ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children for the duration of the excursion, taking into account ratios and all risks and hazards likely to be encountered.

The venue will be assessed as safe for all children and adults on the excursion and will be easily supervised and accessible.

WATER HAZARDS

No excursions will be conducted to a swimming pool or other water related activity. Where there are significant water hazards (such as rivers, lakes or beaches), risk management strategies will be identified and implemented.

CONDUCTING THE EXCURSION

All educators, volunteers and children attending will be informed of excursion timetable/ itinerary, special requirements, safety procedures, grouping of children and responsibilities.

A list of children on the excursion will be left at the service and a copy carried by the delegated Certified Supervisor.

Before leaving on the excursion, a notice will be prominently displayed at the service which includes;

- Itinerary and timetable
- Mobile contact phone number

Items to be taken on excursions include;

- A suitable stocked first-aid kit including epi-pen, asthma medication;
- A mobile phone;
- Children's emergency contact numbers
- The children's attendance roll
- Lists of children in each adults group
- Children's medication, if required
- Other items as required eg. Sunscreen, spare water bottles, spare clothing/ jackets, ice-pack in esky, tissues, garbage bags

If a child is lost on an excursion, we will always leave a staff member behind to look, while the other group leaders escort the children back.

EVALUATION

All excursions are conducted in a safe manner and evaluated. Any improvements identified in the risk assessment prior to conducting the excursion or the evaluations of the excursion are addressed and actioned to ensure children's safety.

STATUTORY LEGISLATION AND CONSIDERATIONS

- ◇ Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011
- ◇ NSW Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000
- ◇ Occupational Health and Safety Regulations 2001

Sources:

- **Guide to the National Quality Standard 2011**
- **Kidsafe NSW—www.kidsafensw.org**
- **Sutherland K (2007): Out There: Rattler, Issue 8**

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