



Catholic Schools Office Diocese of Lismore

Excursions - Overseas and Long Distance Policy & Standard Operating Procedure

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Related Documentation:

Statement of policy

The school recognises the additional responsibility and level of care that must be undertaken when students are taken long distances from school or overseas. This policy is intended to clarify requirements for the planning of excursions of this nature to ensure that legal obligations are met and that values of the school are upheld in what is undertaken. This policy establishes a formal procedure for staff to obtain the necessary approval for excursions of this type.

Scope

This policy and the related procedures applies to all parish schools.

While recognising that excursions that involve distance travel can have significant educational benefits, the school is aware that such activities can be disruptive to academic study, both for students undertaking the excursion and for those students whose teachers are participating and are therefore absent from school. It also places additional financial pressures on parents. In considering whether to proceed with an excursion of this type, the principal will weigh carefully the educational value of a proposed excursion, with the total needs and resources of the school and the financial burden for families of students. Approvals generally will be limited to excursions that will provide students with significant educational opportunities not available by other means.

In the case of long distance overseas travel excursions should be planned in and around school holidays unless there is an overriding valid reason for participating during term time. It is recognised that an excursion may commence a few days before the end of a term or a few days after the commencement of a term due to scheduling needs, availability of lower airfares and similar reasons.

In planning excursions staff need to be conscious of the legal and moral responsibility for student welfare that they accept. Arrangements for care and supervision must reflect the higher degree of risk to students that can exist when travelling long distances within Australia or visiting overseas destinations.

Definitions

Overseas Excursion An excursion to a place outside of the jurisdiction of the Australian government

Long Distance Excursion Where the distance from school involves significant extended travel time, 3 days or more by road or air travel

Principles

Long distance excursions must have a clear and demonstrated educative purpose. The educational worth of such an excursion must be carefully assessed, especially in relation to the context of other events at the school.

Information needs to be communicated to parents so that they are aware that such excursions are approved school activities and that staff are acting as employees whilst on such excursions and will be required to exercise appropriate duty of care. Staff members choose to take part in such excursions. No obligation should be placed on staff in this school to participate in or to organise such an excursion (unless there is a requirement in their contract of employment). Any extra remuneration, other than reimbursement of genuine pre-approved expenses should not be paid in respect of such excursions.



Any such planned excursion must be submitted to the school/college Principal for approval. The concept for the excursion needs to be submitted at least 12 months prior to the planned departure date. Where it is possible detailed arrangements of the trip should be available to the principal at least six months prior to the departure date. In any case the principal must know all arrangements one month prior to departure.

Planning at the school level would normally commence well in advance of this time period particularly where students will need extended training in cultural expectations.

When it has been determined there is an educational need for long distance excursion, the person planning the excursion must ensure all necessary requirements are met in relation to budget and number of supervising teachers to support the number of students attending. A risk assessment of the proposed excursion must be undertaken (Attachment F).

A concept proposal must be presented to the principal for approval prior to the excursion being advertised. The sample form to be used for the concept proposal is set out in Attachment A.

If approval for the concept is given the school can then proceed to advertise the excursion within the community and begin detailed costings, risk assessments and travel plans. When the itinerary for the excursion has been developed and student interest is sufficient to proceed, a full proposal should be presented to the principal for approval. An itemised budget and a risk assessment must be attached to the proposal. The form to be used for the formal proposal is set out in Attachment B. The form for the budget is set out in Attachment C.

Teachers should ensure that costs are contained to a moderate level in order to make such excursions accessible to students. Excursions which would place financial pressure on a significant number of families should not be undertaken.

There are potential salary implications for teacher aides on excursions. The salary arrangements for teacher aides participating on the excursion as official supervisors need to be confirmed by the CSO pay staff well prior to departure.

Procedures

Risk Management Process

Risk management must be undertaken using the appendix procedures in this school policy. These well-defined steps which, when taken in sequence, will support better decision making by contributing to a greater insight into risks and their impacts. Applications for overseas and interstate excursions must be inclusive of risk assessment documentation which has been reviewed by the principal. Such documentation is retained at the school/college to assist with future planning of excursions.

The person planning the excursion must consider emergency response planning and should check relevant forecasts or safety warnings immediately prior to the excursion. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's website: www.dfat.gov.au should be consulted for travel advice generally and, in particular, for details about countries where travel is not recommended. This check should be done prior to submitting the proposal to the principal and again two weeks before the departure date. Notwithstanding the above, at any point the trip may be cancelled or varied in response to advice provided by the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Four levels of advice are offered:

Level 1 Advisory

Trip can proceed.

Level 2 Advisory

Trip can proceed, however staff are advised to tighten student supervision, restrict student activity and to remain vigilant to potential risks. Parents must be advised and requested to check the www.dfat.gov.au site to make an informed decision on whether to allow their child to attend.

Level 3 and Level 4 Advisory

Travel not permitted. Insurance policies may not be reimbursed if 'dfat' upgrades advisory from Level 2 to Level 3 or Level 4.

Individual health care plans for students with specific health care needs or disabilities will need to be developed and should include provision for the management of such conditions on the excursion. The implications of the individual health plans should be discussed before departure.

Supervision

The decision about the number of teachers to accompany the students is to be determined by the principal. This decision will take into account factors such as age, maturity, location of the excursion, specific needs of students, anticipated behaviour and the nature of activities to be undertaken. There must be sufficient numbers of appropriate, responsible adults to ensure and assist with adequate supervision.

A suggested minimum ratio of staff to students is 1:10. There must also be a minimum of two staff travelling with any excursion group no matter how small the group. It is preferable for there to be three staff travelling on any overseas excursion to ensure adequate supervision in the case of illness of either a student or a staff member. If only two staff are travelling with a group, a third staff member must be on standby and able to travel to meet the group at short notice. A contingency for this eventuality needs to be included in the budget for the excursion. Should a replacement staff member need to travel the cost would be met by the school, rather than being passed on to parents.

Accommodation and bathroom arrangements are to be such that no staff member or adult is placed in a position where there is potential for allegations of improper conduct to be made. For co-educational groups, male and female supervisors are required.

Staff Fares

Proposals should show how the fares of staff and other accompanying adults are to be met. At [] school students' participation costs are not to be increased to cover the costs of these



staff and other accompanying adults without express written notification to the parents of the participating students.

Students with a Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act makes it unlawful for a school to subject a student to any detriment on the basis of his / her disability. This may be significant if, for example, an excursion is offered for all students taking a particular course, if one of those students suffers from a disability. All reasonable efforts must be made to enable disabled students to attend excursions with their classes, including thoughtful selection of excursion venues and activities in the first instance.

Financial Accountability

[Insert name of relevant person] will provide guidance about setting excursion budgets, and maintaining books of account and records. The school accountant is able to provide advice as necessary.

Monies not paid directly to the travel agent must be kept within the school's accounting and banking system, as arranged with [insert name of relevant person].

A separate bank account must not be opened and under no circumstances should any funds be placed in or processed through a private bank account.

Whilst on the excursion, the group leader is advised to keep a daily record or activity sheet briefly recording travel details, activities undertaken and appropriate daily roll calls. All receipts are to be retained for all activities, fares, meals etc. These receipts will be required to support the accounting records for audit by the financial officer on return.

The financial officer is to audit the accounts within 30 days of the completion of the excursion and report to the principal.

Travel Agents

Ideally the school should obtain at least three quotes from licensed travel agents before selecting the successful travel agent however, it is recognised that this is not always possible in regional towns. The school will regularly 'test' the market to see if the best value is being obtained. Quotes and records of market testing are to be kept on file.

Staff intending to organise travel for students must take note of the following legal advice from the Ministry of Fair Trading.

"Schools may be able to arrange some travel for students without breaching the Travel Agents Act ("The Act"). The extent to which a school carries on the activity of arranging travel will ultimately determine whether or not they are "carrying on business" as a travel agent without a licence, in breach of the Act. The risk of breach can, however, be minimised by engaging the services of a licensed travel agent whenever practicable."

Where a school intends to engage the services of a licensed travel agent they should engage the agent before taking any money from students and obtain the agent's agreement to the school receiving and holding that money as agent for the travel agent. Alternatively, all monies should be paid directly to the travel agent. In this way, students' monies are "protected" by the Travel Compensation Fund should the travel agent or school fail to account for the money. Monies received from other sources, e.g. through general fund raising, are to be held in the school's normal bank account.

Insurance

Travel insurance must be arranged before any non-refundable bookings are made.

Reimbursement of travel insurance in cases where Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade upgrades the travel advisory from Level 2 to Level 3 might be problematic. Schools are to notify parents that should this occur reimbursement may not be possible and the school is not liable (see <http://smartraveller.gov.au/travel-advice-explained.html>).

Every member of the excursion group should have personal travel insurance cover for the full period of the excursion. Parents or caregivers should arrange personal travel insurance for students, including appropriate cover for personal property. Proof of that cover must be provided to the principal prior to embarkation on the excursion.

Passports & Visas

Where the excursion is to another country or countries, the staff member responsible for organising the excursion and the principal must check each participant's passport and visas (when required). Passports must be current and the expiry date must not be within six months of the date that the excursion will arrive back in Australia. Any visas required must be valid for the dates of the excursion. If more than one country is to be visited more than one visa may be required.

The excursion organiser needs to be aware that for students travelling on non-Australian passports there may be different visa requirements, including the need for a visa to re-enter Australia.

The excursion organiser will give careful consideration to ensuring the security of passports whilst the group is overseas. This might involve staff members collecting and holding student passports. The decision about who will hold passports will depend on the size of the group, the countries visited and the age of the students.

Each staff member is to have in their luggage a full set of copies of the passports of each member of the excursion group. This may be in the form of photocopies or in digital form. A full set must also be held at the school.

Student Expenditure on Tour

The school recommends that personal spending money is taken in the form of a prepaid travel card issued by financial institutions or available through Australia Post. It is expected that the travel card is used to cover expected expenditure that is unable to be covered prior to departure by school cheque or incidental personal expenditure. The student is fully responsible for their own card and for following instructions on its use provided by the financial institution. Students may access automatic teller machines whilst on the excursion and, therefore, are responsible for complying with security measures required by the relevant financial institution. Backup cards are to be lodged with a designated staff member for safe-keeping.

Medical Forms

An updated school medical form must be obtained for each student and taken with staff on the excursion. Prior to departure the staff member organising the excursion must read each medical form so that he/she is aware of potential medical emergencies that may arise such as asthma attacks or serious allergies. An appropriate plan of action in such an event should be discussed with the principal prior to departure.



Attachment D contains a model medical and parent consent form.

Medications – Overseas Destinations

The organiser of the excursion must ensure he/she has a medical certificate to cover any prescribed medication being taken on the excursion. This will necessitate the student/teacher/helper taking the medication, obtaining this certificate from their medical practitioner. The medical practitioner will need to check that the particular medication is permitted to be brought into the country concerned.

Older students should be responsible for their own medication. The Parent Authority and Consent Form – Attachment D has further advice on medications.

Billeting

If students are to be billeted whilst on the excursion the principal will check that the host school has procedures in place that ensure the safety and welfare of visiting students. This assurance needs to be in place prior to the excursion proposal being approved. (See Attachment F for good practice in billeting.) Billeting in pairs is preferred however it is appreciated that this is not always possible.

During the excursion, 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 travelling with the students 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.

Mobile numbers of students (where the student has a phone on the excursion) must be kept by the organiser and colleague teachers. Students expressing concerns about safety or comfort when in billeting situations must be attended to immediately and alternative arrangements put in place.

First Aid

All staff members of the excursion group must have a current qualification in First Aid and CPR. At least one staff member must hold a current Senior First Aid Certificate.

Emergencies

There must be a plan of action and agreed notification procedure approved by the principal prior to departure, in case of illness, accident or other emergency.

See Attachment E for an Emergency Contact Information form.

Every staff member must have a mobile phone that will operate in the countries visited - either an Australian SIM card with global roaming or a SIM card bought in the country visited. Students are to be given these phone numbers. At least one staff phone number must be known prior to the group leaving Australia and provided to the school and to parents prior to departure. This will be the emergency contact phone and must be left on 24 hours a day. Parents should also be given an emergency contact number for the school for the full period of the excursion.



Parents, Caregivers and Volunteers

Parents, caregivers and volunteers must be briefed on arrangements prior to the excursion and sign to say they are aware of the risk management plan, accommodation arrangements, supervision details and the itinerary.

On the rare occasion where it is proposed that a student or group of students will participate in an independent activity without the direct supervision of a staff member, it is imperative that the parent or caregiver be fully informed of, and agrees in writing with the arrangements.

Final Plans

Details of final itinerary, insurance details, rules, medical forms, emergency contact details (phone, email etc), a full list of all students, teacher and helper names and addresses and any other related documents must be lodged with the principal at least one month prior to departure. Teachers and volunteers accompanying the excursion must read the policy, procedures and risk management plan prior to departure.

Report

Upon completion of the excursion, a summary report must be submitted to the principal together with any photographic or film record which may be required for the school magazine or website.

Excursion Records

The principal must ensure that all records of the excursion are retained. This includes a copy of any advice given to parents, costs, approval letters and administrative and travel details. In the event of an injury to a student or property damage, records relating to the excursion must be retained until the injured party reaches the age of 25, or for seven years, whichever is the greater.

Alcohol

Students must not be served alcohol under any circumstances even if some students are 18 years of age. This is regardless of licensing laws in the country or countries being visited.

Alcohol must not be consumed by teachers or helpers immediately before or whilst in control of students. The students' welfare is to be considered at all times. At other times no staff are to drink to excess and at any one time there must be at least one designated non-drinker among the staff, in case of emergencies.

Appropriate Behaviour

Students should be instructed on appropriate behaviour, as they are ambassadors of the country and the school whilst they are away. Students participating in excursions to communities which are culturally different from our own should be briefed on cultural sensitivities (e.g. dress) and appropriate communication in cross cultural contexts.

Any grossly inappropriate student behaviour on the excursion must be reported to the principal immediately. Arrangements need to be in place to facilitate the return to their parents of any student who exhibits behaviour that seriously endangers themselves or others. Written confirmation from parents must be obtained prior to departure of the excursion to acknowledge agreement to the arrangements proposed.

Child Protection Requirements

Students should be briefed about their right to be safe and protected, and about positive strategies and avenues for support should concerns arise. Organising teachers should take the time to work with students to consider unexpected situations and risks that might occur during the excursion and to discuss strategies for eliminating or controlling risks (as in risk management plan).

The legislative requirements relating to mandatory reporting of children and young people who may be at risk of harm will need to be considered and procedures set up to ensure compliance for both teachers and volunteer helpers. Principals must ensure that volunteers accompanying the excursion including any parents and partners of staff members have completed any documentation required by legislation.

Fringe Benefit Tax Implications

If the school is 'part funding' this excursion, teachers should be aware that Fringe Benefit Tax may apply to any portion of the trip that is not part of the group itinerary. A full travel diary, noting each work activity, the nature of that activity, the duration, where and when it took place and the date the entry was made, and all relative receipts, will need to be kept to substantiate the non-payment of Fringe Benefit Tax.

An employee declaration must be obtained in all cases where appropriate receipts are not provided. It is expected that this would be the exception. A copy of the travel diary and employee declaration for each funded teacher is to be kept on the school file for audit purposes.

ORGANISATION FLOW CHART

See Attachment G.

<p>SCHOOL NAME</p> <p>CONCEPT PROPOSAL</p> <p>Long Distance Excursion</p> <p>Within Australia or overseas</p>

Destination of excursion: _____

Organiser: _____

Organiser's position on staff: _____

Dates of proposed excursion: _____
(if includes any school days explain why cannot be run in school holidays)

Description of trip including any outdoor activities:
(please attach draft itinerary including travel arrangements)

Purpose of trip: *(including curriculum context, educational value)*

DETAILS OF STUDENTS

Number in group: _____

Sex: _____

Year Group: _____

Cost: _____

Names of other adults attending:

Name	M/F	Teacher/Parent/Other	CPR/First Aid Yes/No	Expiry Date of Qualification

Students to subsidise cost of staff/helpers' travel?

Yes / No

Dress: *(school uniform / mufti)*

Approved by

Date approved

Principal

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____



School Name
APPLICATION FOR LONG DISTANCE EXCURSION

Destination of excursion:

Organiser:

Organiser's position on staff:

Dates of proposed excursion:

(if includes any school days explain why cannot be run in school holidays)

Description of trip including any outdoor activities:

(please attach draft itinerary including travel arrangements)

Purpose of trip: *(including curriculum context, educational value)*

DETAILS OF STUDENTS

Number in group:

Sex:

Year Group:

Cost *(budget attached)*:

Risk assessment summary: *(please attach full assessment)*

Names of other adults attending:

Name	M/F	Teacher/Parent/Other	CPR/First Aid Yes/No	Expiry Date of Qualification

Students to subsidise cost of staff/helpers' travel?

Yes / No

Dress: *(school uniform / mufti)*

Approved by

Date approved

Principal



School Name
BUDGET FOR LONG DISTANCE EXCURSION

Name of staff member organising excursion.....

Year group and subject:

Date of excursion to..... no. of days

Destination:.....

Allowance for non-attendance: (*cancellation cost*)

Hardship student/s:

Number of paying teachers/helpers:

Method of travel:

Fare cost per student: \$

Accommodation cost per student: \$

Meals per student: \$

Other entry costs etc: \$

Travel/medical insurance costs: \$

TOTAL COST: \$

Other spending money required: \$

Total cost per student: \$

Suggested charge per student: \$

Organiser: (*print name*)

..... signature:

Inspected and approved by:

Financial Officer

Cost to be charged per student.....

Signature of Co-ordinator.....

Approved by Principal..... date:

OVERSEAS or other LONG DISTANCE TRAVEL PARENT AUTHORITY AND CONSENT FORM

I parent/guardian of
.....

hereby:

1. Give permission forto attend the excursion in20.....
2. Consent to my child travelling on or in any form of public or private transport where such transport is deemed by the school to be necessary or desirable.
3. Consent to my child participating in all activities, outings, excursions and functions arranged.
4. a) Consent to the school by its servants or agents seeking such medical or dental advice on behalf of my child as seen fit in the event of accident or illness and if in the opinion of an attending medical or dental practitioner or medical officer my child requires medical or dental attention or treatment including but not limited to the administration of anaesthetic, blood transfusion or the performance of any surgical operation, to such medical or dental practitioner or medical officer giving such attention or treatment, provided that reasonable efforts are made to inform me of any serious injury or illness.
b) Certify that the consent which I have given in paragraph (a) is valid at all times while my child is in the custody of the school attending or participating in an outing, excursion or function.
5. Certify that I understand that the school will take reasonable care in the event of my child suffering accident or illness but that it will not be responsible for the costs of any medical or dental attention or treatment administered to my child in such event nor will it be responsible directly for any act or omission of any medical or dental practitioner or medical officer attending or treating my child.
6. Understand that in the case of an interstate excursion, ambulance cover arrangements may be different to NSW cover. If an ambulance is necessary for my child I agree to reimburse the school if my cover is not sufficient.
7. Certify that if my child should exhibit behaviour that seriously endangers themselves or others, I will bear the cost of the return flight/travel home.

Please answer the following medical questions about your child:

-
1. Date of birth
 2. Medicare number
 3. Private health insurance
 - Membership no
 4. Ambulance cover **Yes / No**
 5. Is your child in good health? **Yes / No**
 6. Does your child suffer any chronic illness, disability or allergy? **Yes / No**
If yes, please explain
.....

7. Has your child suffered from any acute illness in the past four months? **Yes / No**
If yes, give details

.....
.....

8. Has your child been treated by a doctor in the past four weeks? **Yes / No**
If yes, please attach a medical certificate outlining treatment, and stating that the participant is fit to attend excursion

.....
.....

9. Has your child had any major surgery? **Yes / No**
If yes, please specify

.....
.....

10. Does your child need to take any form of medication on the trip? **Yes / No**
If yes, please provide details (dosage, frequency etc)

.....
.....

(Primary students only)

The medicine is to be kept by the student / nominated staff member.

11. Do you give permission for Panadol to be administered, if required? **Yes / No**

12. Has your child had the Diphtheria Tetanus Toxoid booster injection? **Yes / No**
If yes, in what year?

13. Does your child have any special dietary requirements? **Yes / No**
If yes, please provide details

.....
.....

Emergency contact in the case of accident or illness:

Name

Relationship to child

Phone (H).....(W).....(M).....

I understand that the information I provide on this form will be handled in accordance with relevant Privacy legislation

Signature:Parent / Guardian

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

1. School /Group
2. **Name of Group Leader**,
(H)..... (M)
email
3. Excursion departure date.....
4. **Return information**
DateTimeLocation
5. **Group**
Total number.....AdultsGroup Members
6. **Emergency Contact Information.**

a) During school hours

Contact Name	Telephone number	Mobile Number	Email address

b) Out of school hours

Contact Name	Telephone number	Mobile Number	Email address

c) Travel company

Name/address.....
.....

Tel..... Fax.....

Contact name.....

Tel..... Fax.....

Insurance/Emergency Assistant:

Please attach

- An emergency contact list for all members of the travel group
- An itinerary containing addresses and contact details

GOOD PRACTICE IN BILLETING

(Guidelines for the Safe Conduct of Sport and Physical Activity in Schools -
Department of Education and Training, NSW)

- Determine whether billeting is the preferred option for the proposed activity.
- Commence planning as far in advance as possible.
- Appoint a coordinator at both the visiting school and the host school. Coordinators must establish mechanisms for collaboration and regular communication.
- Establish a clear timeline for the billeting process.
- Billet the group of students, where possible, at one school or neighbouring schools so that they can travel together.
- Billet two or more students of the same sex together, where possible. This allows for increased comfort and safety of students and often requires little extra organisation for the host family.
- Ensure that consent forms are signed and medical information forms completed by the parents or caregivers of students to be billeted.
- Provide the names and ages of students to be billeted to the host school as early as possible. Suggested groupings for multiple billets and individual issues such as special needs should be included. Communication between coordinators can enhance the effectiveness of matching students to host families. Ensure that appropriate information about students is provided to host families.
- Provide details of billeting families and allocated students to the coordinator of the visiting school at least seven days before the commencement of the activity. This information is usually required at least four weeks in advance for visiting overseas schools.
- Ensure that an adult from each family hosting a billet has signed an acknowledgement of the billeting conditions.
- Child protection is a critical issue for education authorities world wide. In organising an overseas excursion, teachers must discuss with the host school CSO requirements for child protection.
- Ensure contact between coordinators to discuss any final arrangements at least seven days before the activity.
- Provide for alternate suitable accommodation, should there not be enough families volunteering to host the visiting students.
- Provide a program to all participants in the billeting activity prior to the commencement of the activity. Include:
 - the agenda
 - venues
 - meeting times, places and addresses
 - group travel arrangements.
- Ensure that requirements and expectations about transporting students to and from group meeting places are made clear to the adults in billeting families. Consider establishing a meeting time each day for billeted students so that they can raise issues.
- Provide students to be billeted with information on things that can go wrong and strategies for keeping themselves safe.
- Ensure that lines of communication, including contact phone numbers, are known to all students and their families for contact with the coordinator.
- Communicate to all participants that no unplanned alterations to billeting arrangements may be made without the approval of the coordinator.

OVERSEAS AND LONG DISTANCE EXCURSIONS ORGANISATION FLOWCHART



