

Excursions Policy Implementation Procedures

Contents

1	Introduction.....	2
2	Educational value	4
3	Inclusivity	5
4	Duty of care	6
5	Parents, caregivers and volunteers.....	8
6	Child protection.....	9
7	Risk management.....	10
8	Consent	12
9	Transport	15
10	Student behaviour.....	17
11	Overseas excursions: additional procedures.....	17
12	Accounting and administration relating to excursions.....	19
13	Briefing students prior to excursions	21
14	Billeting of students on excursion.....	21
15	Related documents and advice.....	23

Updated to reference FA387 – March 2018

Hyperlinks updated – June 2017

Document last reviewed – October 2014

1 Introduction

1.1 These implementation procedures should be read in conjunction with the department's [Excursions Policy](#).

1.2 Definition

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

1.3 Applicability

1.3.1 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)

1.3.2 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 [Youth & Leadership Development Programs Advice](#).

1.3.3 Workplace learning is not covered by this policy or these procedures. See [Workplace Learning Policy for Secondary Students in Government Schools](#).

1.3.4 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](#).

1.4 Excursions involving Preschool Children

1.4.1 Excursions involving preschool children are subject to specific legislative requirements. [The Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011](#), in particular regulations 100, 101 and 102, deal specifically with excursions. While an increased adult to child ratio is not specified in the National Regulations, there is a requirement to adequately supervise children at all times. A thorough risk assessment should determine whether minimum ratios are sufficient to provide adequate supervision while attending an excursion.

Risk Assessment of preschool excursions

- 1.4.2 A risk assessment must be carried out for an excursion before permission is sought. The risk assessment must identify and assess risks that the excursion may pose to the safety, health or wellbeing of any child being taken on the excursion, and detail strategies for minimising those risks.
- 1.4.3 The risk assessment must consider the proposed route and destination for the excursion, any water hazards and risks associated with water based activities, the method of transport, the number of adults and children involved in the excursion, given the risk/s posed, the number of teachers or other responsible adults that is appropriate to provide supervision and whether any specialised skills are required to ensure children's safety (e.g. life-saving skills), the proposed activities, the likely length of time of the excursion and the items that should be taken on the excursion (e.g. a mobile phone and a list of emergency contact numbers for children on the excursion).

First Aid on preschool excursions

- 1.4.4 Appropriate first aid equipment must be taken on preschool excursions and at least one staff member must have approved first aid qualifications. Additionally, as required by the department's First Aid Procedures, the first aid kit for preschools must include a general use adrenaline auto injector (i.e. EpiPen®) and an ASCIA action plan general use for the adrenaline auto injector. Staff members on the excursion must have completed anaphylaxis training.
- 1.4.5 In addition to the specific requirements listed above, staff planning excursions involving preschool children should follow the directions given in the rest of these procedures e.g. with regard to child protection, risk assessment and risk management planning.

1.5 Virtual Excursions

- 1.5.1 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.
- 1.5.2 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 should be considered when planning 'virtual excursions'.

Delegations for Approval of Excursions

- 1.5.3 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.
- 1.5.4 Overseas excursions require the approval of the Executive Director, Public Schools NSW following a submission from the principal which must be endorsed by the Director, Public Schools NSW.

1.6 Review of School Excursion Procedures

- 1.6.1 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 identify successful practice as well as areas for improvement.

2 Educational value

2.1 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 impact on the continuity of regular teaching and learning programs for participating teachers and students.

- 2.1.1 While recognising the potential benefits of excursions, schools must also recognise that such activities may interrupt regular learning routines of students. Accordingly, principals must consider the educational value of all proposed excursions in relation to the overall needs and resources of the school. The rationale for any excursion should reference the school's curriculum objectives and should be relevant to their achievement.
- 2.1.2 Prior to any excursion there must be consultation between the principal and teacher or teachers concerned with its organisation. Except as provided for in Section 8.2 below, 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.

2.2 Film screenings and live performances

- 2.2.1 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.
- 2.2.2 Staff giving consideration to excursions involving film screenings should refer to the [Audiovisual materials in schools - procedures for use](#).

- 2.2.3 Staff giving consideration to excursions involving live performances, including public lectures and presentations, should refer to the [Controversial Issues in Schools policy](#).

3 Inclusivity

- 3.1 Excursions are inclusive, and all students in the specific learning group, including those with disabilities, are to be given the opportunity to participate.**
- 3.1.1 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.
- 3.1.2 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.
- 3.1.3 The support needs of students with disabilities or special learning needs, including those with medical conditions will require careful consideration and consultation with parents and caregivers. Consideration must be given to making reasonable adjustments to enable a student with a disability to participate in an excursion where necessary. Parents or caregivers and, if practicable, the student should be consulted as part of this process.
- 3.1.4 Appropriate support should be provided for these students so they can access the learning experiences available through excursions. Individual health care plans must be reviewed prior to excursions to confirm that any necessary planning and emergency arrangements are in place. Students (where practicable) and parents must be consulted about any changes that are being considered to an individual health care plan.
- 3.1.5 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.
- 3.1.6 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.

4 Duty of care

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

- 4.1.1 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.
- 4.1.2 Under work health and safety legislation, the department has an obligation to do what is reasonably practicable 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.
- 4.1.3 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 Health and Safety Directorate's Safety Management System and, in particular, the Emergency Management Guidelines.
- 4.1.4 All school staff are required to have completed e-Emergency care training and anaphylaxis training. **These qualifications must be current.**
- 4.1.5 An appropriately equipped first aid kit must be taken on all excursions. Additionally, as required by the department's First Aid Procedures, the first aid kit must include a general use adrenaline auto injector (i.e. EpiPen®) and an [ASCIA action plan](#) (general use) for adrenaline auto injector.
- 4.1.6 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.
- 4.1.7 Staff planning excursions involving students with health care needs including those diagnosed with a medical condition that may require an emergency response will consider issues such as administration of prescribed and emergency medication (e.g. adrenaline auto injector, asthma reliever medication) health care procedures and emergency response plans. They will also consider information about disabilities, including special learning needs, that may impact on overall management of the student's health condition on the excursion.
- 4.1.8 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 and should complete any relevant training, including the department's annual child protection training, e-Emergency care training and anaphylaxis training prior to participation in a school excursion.

4.2 Teacher to student ratios

- 4.2.1 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.
- 4.2.2 Principals 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 specific sport and physical activity guidelines section of [School sport, Sport safety guidelines](#).
- 4.2.3 There must be sufficient numbers of appropriate, responsible adults, including Learning and Support teachers and School Learning Support Officers, to ensure and assist with adequate supervision. Other adults assisting with the excursion may include parents, volunteers, specialist instructors and venue staff. Note, however, the directions contained in Section 5 below.
- 4.2.4 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 4.4 below.

4.3 Overnight excursions

- 4.3.1 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 inappropriate behaviour including sexual contact by or between students.
- 4.3.2 For coeducational groups, male and female staff supervisors are required. Schools experiencing difficulties in meeting this requirement should consult their Director, Public Schools NSW.

4.4 Unsupervised activities

- 4.4.1 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.

4.5 Privately Arranged Tours

- 4.5.1 The Department of Education 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.
- 4.5.2 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.

5 Parents, caregivers and volunteers

- 5.1.1 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.
- 5.1.2 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.
- 5.1.3 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.
- 5.1.4 In most circumstances parents, caregivers and volunteers who assist on excursions should not have to pay to attend.
- 5.1.5 Parents, caregivers and volunteers must be appropriately briefed on safety and behaviour measures, including student health conditions that may require an emergency response, prior to the excursion to ensure competency. The student and his or her parent must be advised that this is being done. Principals must ensure that all parents, caregivers or volunteers accompanying school excursions complete a [Working with Children Check – Declaration for volunteers and contractors](#) prior to the excursion, in terms of

the department's [Working with Children Check Policy](#).

- 5.1.6 Volunteers are not to accompany the excursion if they refuse to complete the [Working with Children Check-Declaration for volunteers and contractors](#).
- 5.1.7 Depending on the circumstances, principals might also consider:
 - a) checking the department's not to be employed list, or
 - b) consulting referees.

6 Child protection

- 6.1 Education has an important role to support children and young people and to identify where problems arise that may put their safety, welfare or wellbeing at risk. Please see the department's [Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People policy](#) and [procedures](#) for further advice regarding staff roles and responsibilities in relation to child protection.
 - 6.1.1 All staff have a responsibility to report risk of harm concerns about children and young people, within their roles, and to provide support to children and young people throughout all stages of an excursion, as they do in schools.
 - 6.1.2 All departmental staff are also required to have current child protection training.
 - 6.1.3 The principal or other delegated person must ascertain if an employer or contractor providing a service to students during a school excursion has verified the Working with Children Check number of 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 has not registered as an employer with The Office of the Children's Guardian, in order to verify employee Working with Children Check identification numbers, they must not be used to provide a service to students until such time as they:
 - a) register as an employer with The Office of the Children's Guardian
 - b) have verified the Working with Children Check numbers of those staff considered to be engaged in paid child-related employment
 - 6.1.4 Further information about the requirements of the Working with Children Check is available from the [Working with Children Check Procedures for Principals](#) page.
 - 6.1.5 Child related employers or contractors can find more information about their responsibilities under the Child Protection (Working with Children) Act at: <http://www.kidsguardian.nsw.gov.au/Working-with-children/working-with-children-check>.

7 Risk management

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

- 7.1.1 The [Work Health and Safety Act and Regulation](#) require principals and teachers organising excursions to use risk management to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, 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.
- 7.1.2 [Risk Management Process and Proforma](#) (staff 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.
- 7.1.3 [The Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011](#) require a risk assessment to be carried out for an excursion involving preschool children before permission is sought (see 1.4 above).
- 7.1.4 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.
- 7.1.5 The extent of pre-excursion planning will depend on the nature of the excursion, the age of the students attending, the number of students involved and the location of the excursion. In many situations prior experience of the site or a briefing from a responsible person with a sound knowledge of the site will suffice.
- 7.1.6 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](#)).
- 7.1.7 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 who may be instrumental in initiating an emergency response. Students should be informed of these plans where necessary.
- 7.1.8 Teachers leading excursions involving sporting or physical activities should also consult the [Sport and Physical Activity in Schools, Safe Conduct Guidelines](#).

- 7.1.9 For further information refer to the resource documents and risk management resource materials on the Health and Safety Directorate's [Safety Management System](#) (staff only).

7.2 Special requirements including special protective equipment

- 7.2.1 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 wear clothing that protects them from the sun, such as broad brimmed hats and longer sleeve lengths and apply at least a 30+ sunscreen. Students should also be encouraged to carry water in a non-breakable container.
- 7.2.2 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.

7.3 Swimming and water activities

- 7.3.1 Where any excursion involves swimming or water activities, principals must ensure that the eight elements of the [Swimming and Water Safety guidelines](#) (venue selection; parent/caregiver consent; staff supervision; risk management; staff induction; student induction; testing student proficiency; and classifying students) are all complied with.
- 7.3.2 Parents must be asked to indicate the swimming ability of their children when giving consent for students to participate in excursions involving water activities. See the [Swimming and Water Safety guidelines](#) on Obtaining Parent/Caregiver permission which contains links to aquatic activity consent forms. 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.
- 7.3.3 It will also be necessary to determine the aquatic proficiency of students prior to participation in unstructured aquatic activity. See Section 3 Step 7: The Challenge - Testing Student Proficiency of the [Swimming and Water Safety guidelines](#).
This assessment must take place even if parental or caregiver permission for the student to participate in the swimming or water activities is granted. Where parental or caregiver permission is declined student participation in swimming or water activities should not proceed.
- 7.3.4 Principals and teachers organising excursions involving swimming and water activities should also consult the [Swimming and Water Safety](#) section of [School Sport - sport safety guidelines](#).
- 7.3.5 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.

7.4 Additional activities

- 7.4.1 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).

7.5 Risk Management associated with excursions to courts

- 7.5.1 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.
- 7.5.2 Risk management plans should ensure that students are appropriately supervised throughout the excursion.
- 7.5.3 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.
- 7.5.4 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.

8 Consent

8.1 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.

- 8.1.1 The fact that parents or caregivers consent to the participation of their child in an excursion does not remove the responsibility of school staff for taking all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the particular activity is safe.
- 8.1.2 Other sample consent forms for excursions involving physical activity can be found in the [School Sport - sport safety guidelines](#).
- 8.1.3 Refer to [Parent or caregiver information and consent form](#) and school excursion [Letter to parents](#) incorporating form for parental request to administer medication or other support at school for a student's health condition form.

8.1.4 Medication

In general, schools do not administer medication which has not been specifically requested by a medical practitioner for an individual student for a specific condition. In some cases the medical practitioner may not write 'a prescription' for such medication because it may be available 'over the counter'. NSW Health advises that this does not mean that the medication is not potentially harmful and that schools should follow the same procedures for such medications as for 'prescribed medications'.

Students may need access to non-prescription medications at particular times and for particular events, for example, a student with a tendency for travel sickness who is going on an excursion involving coach travel.

Key points to remember:

- Parents must complete a written request for the administration of the medication.
- Students must not self-administer or carry medications unless there is a written agreement between the school and the student's parents.
- It is the parent's responsibility to provide the medication to the school in a timely manner. If the principal agrees, this responsibility may be fulfilled by the student but this will be dependent upon the maturity of the student, parental consent and any other issues that could affect the safety of the individual student or others in the school environment.
- Schools should not supply medications for administration to students.

8.1.5 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 at least annually and as required and take account of activities proposed for the excursion.

8.1.6 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.

8.1.7 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 needs.

Check if the information provided by the parent is unclear

8.1.8 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.

Consent forms covering multiple excursions

- 8.1.9 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. The consent form should remind parents to notify the school if the student develops health care needs or if there are changes to an existing medical condition. However, if a significant variation in the activities occurs, a separate consent form is required.

Student participation in an excursion in the absence of consent

- 8.1.10 As a general rule, students without a signed consent form from a parent or caregiver must not be permitted to participate in a school excursion.
- 8.1.11 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. Consideration should be given to confirming in writing the oral consent provided using, for example, a return email.

Translation of consent forms

- 8.1.12 In some circumstances, consent forms may need to be translated into languages other than English. Translations of generic [excursion consent forms](#) are available in many languages.

What happens if parental consent cannot be obtained?

- 8.1.13 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](#) (staff only).
- 8.1.14 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.
- 8.1.15 Collection of personal information such as consent and medical information should be done consistent with the [Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act](#) and the [Health Records Information Privacy Act](#). Staff should refer to the Privacy notice in [Parent or caregiver information and consent form](#) (staff only) and other [advice on privacy protection on the Legal Services website](#) (staff only).

8.2 Unscheduled activities

- 8.2.1 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.
- 8.2.2 Such visits may only take place at the discretion of the principal, who must ensure as far as possible the safety, welfare and wellbeing 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.
- 8.2.3 Note that preschool children should not participate in such unscheduled activities unless parent permission has previously been given. Refer to section 1.4 for further information.

9 Transport

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

- 9.1.1 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.
- 9.1.2 Bus, rail and ferry services should be used for school excursions, wherever appropriate.

9.2 Bus and train travel

- 9.2.1 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. Further information about child restraints in motor vehicles is found on the [Legal Services](#) website (staff only).
- 9.2.2 In the case of large vehicles, the number of passengers must not exceed the number that the vehicle is licensed to carry.
- 9.2.3 When organising an excursion by rail, principals should contact their local railway station concerning excursion concessions and other arrangements.
- 9.2.4 If students with disabilities are participating in an excursion accessible transport will be required.

- 9.2.5 Staff planning excursions involving bus and coach travel, including the use of school owned vehicles, should be aware of the national [heavy vehicle reform](#) program and its impact on travel time and driver availability.

9.3 Car travel

- 9.3.1 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:
- a) written permission from the parent(s) or caregiver(s) of the student(s) being transported is obtained
 - b) the driver is licensed and, if issued with a provisional licence, complies with any [relevant peer passenger conditions](#)
 - c) the vehicle is registered
 - d) the number of passengers in the vehicle does not exceed the number of seatbelts
 - e) 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.
- 9.3.2 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. Further information about the use of cars for transporting students can be found in [Legal Issues Bulletins 8 and 24](#).
- 9.3.3 Principals must ensure that all parents, caregivers or volunteers who transport students in cars complete a [Working with Children Check, Appendix 5 – Declaration for volunteers and contractors](#) prior to the excursion.
- 9.3.4 For further information on road safety and student drivers, see the [Road Safety Education, Driver Education and Training Policy](#).

9.4 Air travel

- 9.4.1 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.
- 9.4.2 Where approval is given for short flights, principals must satisfy themselves that the operator carries relevant public liability insurance.
- 9.4.3 For insurance arrangements refer to section 12.5 below.

10 Student behaviour

10.1 Students must behave appropriately at all times on excursions

- 10.1.1 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.
- 10.1.2 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.

10.2 Students must behave appropriately when animals are encountered on excursions.

- 10.2.1 Students also should be briefed on appropriate behaviour around animals. Responsible behaviour involves not interfering with the animal. Injury is 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.
- 10.2.2 Appropriate touching of animals, where there is educational value in the activity, should be supervised by teachers, parents, caregivers or volunteers.
- 10.2.3 Further information can be found in the [Animal Welfare Policy](#) and the [Animal Welfare Guidelines for Teachers](#).
- 10.2.4 School excursions to abattoirs are generally not encouraged owing to the risk of contracting Q Fever and other zoonotic diseases. There are however, curriculum specific circumstances in Agriculture and HSC VET where livestock and carcass assessments are integral to the program and visits to abattoirs and meat processing plants are warranted. Consequently, students aged 15 years or over may now undertake workplace learning in meat processing plants with an abattoir facility. Conditions apply. For more detail see the [Memorandum DN/05/00406 New Guidelines on Student Attendance at Meat Processing Plants](#) and the Senior Pathways Workplace Learning documents [Student workplace learning in NSW meat processing plants](#).

11 Overseas excursions: additional procedures

- 11.1 An overseas excursion 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.

- 11.2 Approval for overseas excursions cannot be assumed. Funds relating to such excursions should not be committed prior to approval being granted.
- 11.3 At **least nine months** prior to the date of planned departure principals must alert their Director, Public Schools NSW of their intention to organise an overseas excursion, and seek approval to continue using the form Notice of Intention to Plan an Overseas Excursion found as part of the [Overseas Excursions - Advice and Application Pack](#) (staff only).
- 11.4 Once approval to proceed has been granted by the Director, Public Schools NSW principals should familiarise themselves with the [Overseas Excursions - Advice and Application Pack](#). Applications to travel overseas, contained in the pack, must be forwarded by the principal to the Director, Public Schools NSW **at least four months** prior to the date of the planned excursion.
- 11.5 Approval will generally only be given for excursions that occur substantially in vacation time.
- 11.6 Overseas travel will not proceed, regardless of the proximity to the date of departure and other organisational matters, if the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has recommended against travel. Advice regarding travel to particular countries is on the DFAT web site at: www.smarttraveller.gov.au.
- 11.7 School groups on overseas excursions will register prior to departure with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's [Register of Australians travelling overseas](#). See [Supporting information](#) on the DFAT website or call 1300 555 135.
- 11.8 Overseas sporting visits conducted by the NSW Combined High Schools Sports Association will be organised with the assistance of the School Sport Unit and will require the approval of the Executive Director, Learning and Leadership.
- 11.9 Overseas music tours conducted by, or with the assistance of, the Arts Unit will require the approval of the Executive Director, Learning and Leadership.
- 11.10 A first aid kit must be taken on all overseas excursions and that first aid kit must include a general use adrenaline auto injector (i.e. EpiPen®) and an ASCIA action plan general use for the adrenaline auto injector. Principals should check any requirements that countries visited may have in relation to this medication being brought into the country. In accordance with departmental requirements, each staff member must be trained through [E-emergency care](#) and [anaphylaxis](#), and at least one member must be trained in CPR.

12 Accounting and administration relating to excursions

12.1 Accounting for Excursion Funds

- 12.1.1 The accounting requirements for excursions over one day are outlined in Section 8.7 of the [School Manual on Financial Management](#) (staff only). Reference should be made to Sections 4.2 and 4.3 for other relevant accounting requirements.
- 12.1.2 For information concerning excursions and GST, refer to the [Schools Finance website](#) (staff only).

12.2 Reporting of Incidents Occurring while on excursions

- 12.2.1 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; or is an incident which WorkCover describes as a 'serious incident' which must be reported by law.
- 12.2.2 Prior to the excursion, principals should ensure that staff leading the excursion are familiar with the department's [incident reporting policy and procedures](#) (staff only).

12.3 Retention of Excursion Records

- 12.3.1 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.
- 12.3.2 Local offices must also ensure that a database of approved overseas excursions is maintained.
- 12.3.3 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 [Disposal Authorities](#) (staff only).
- 12.3.4 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 for 25 years.
- 12.3.5 When principals make contact with the [Child Wellbeing Unit](#) (staff only) or [Community Services Helpline](#) about the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a child or young person during the course of an excursion, a record must be kept. This documentation should be retained for 70 years (according to

Functional Records Disposal Schedule DA 141.18.12.01) and should be kept confidential. Further information can be found at section 12 of the [Protecting and Supporting Child and Young People](#) procedures.

12.4 Benefits, Subsidies and Gratuities Associated with Excursions

- 12.4.1 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.
- 12.4.2 Reference should be made to the department's [Code of Conduct](#).
- 12.4.3 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.

12.5 Insurance Arrangements Relating to Excursions

- 12.5.1 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.
- 12.5.2 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.
- 12.5.3 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 from [Business Services Directorate](#). (staff only).
- 12.5.4 **Ambulance Cover**
From 2012, the Ambulance Service of New South Wales is responsible for the state wide insurance coverage for the provision of emergency ambulance services to all enrolled NSW Government school students. Schools do not have to arrange individual payments to the Ambulance Service of NSW.

In the event that a student enrolled in a NSW government school has an accident or falls ill whilst at school or on an organised, fully supervised school excursion and requires an emergency ambulance service, the Ambulance Service of NSW Group Cover Scheme-Schools (AGSC-S) ensures that neither the school nor the parents will be responsible for the

payment of the ambulance account under the terms and conditions of the Policy. The Ambulance Cover Policy is available on the [NSW Ambulance Service website](#).

The AGSC-S provides for reciprocal emergency ambulance services in all Australian States and Territories, except for Queensland and South Australia. Excursions within Victoria, Australian Capital Territory, Western Australia, Northern Territory and Tasmania are covered under reciprocal arrangements.

For further information, schools can contact the Health and Safety Directorate for assistance on 9707 6226.

13 Briefing students prior to excursions

- 13.1 Prior to any excursion, students should be briefed on the school's expectations of their behaviour.
- 13.2 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.
- 13.3 The parents of individual students with particular health care needs, and to the extent this is practicable, individual students, must be consulted about how their health care needs will be met during the excursion, especially where the arrangements differ from standard practice at school.
- 13.4 All students should be briefed on the importance of advising staff or others (eg volunteers, billet parents) if they are unwell or if they believe one of their fellow students is unwell.
- 13.5 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.
- 13.6 Students should also be briefed on appropriate behaviour around animals.

14 Billeting of students on excursion

- 14.1 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.
- 14.2 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.
- 14.3 Processes to screen the accommodation and the billeting families may be difficult to arrange. In these circumstances alternative accommodation may be more appropriate.
- 14.4 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 included in the document Good practice in billeting available from the [Excursions Policy](#) website.
- 14.5 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 responsibilities that the department has in relation to the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and young people and the measures that need to be in place to fulfil that obligation.

If there are concerns for the safety, welfare or wellbeing of a student on excursion due to their homestay environment, staff should address the concerns in line with the department’s [Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People policy](#) and [procedures](#), relocate the student to another approved accommodation arrangement and inform the student's parents of the move. Further advice on talking to children, young people and families about child protection concerns can be found at section 15 of the Protecting and Supporting Children and Young People procedures.

- 14.6 Principals should also refer to [Good Practice in Billeting](#).

15 Related documents and advice

15.1 Related Documents

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

[Anaphylaxis Procedures for Schools and associated health conditions](#)

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

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

[Student Health website](#)

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

[Health and Safety: Emergency Management Guidelines \(staff only\)](#)

[Health and Safety: Safety Management System: Excursions \(staff only\)](#)

[Health and Safety: Safety Management System: Risk Management \(staff only\)](#)

[Health and Safety: Safety Management System: Incident Management \(staff only\)](#)

[Animal Welfare Policy – Schools](#)

15.2 Advice

[Early Learning and Primary Education Directorate](#)

[Legal Services Directorate \(staff only\)](#)

[Health and Safety Directorate \(staff only\)](#)

[School Sport Unit](#)

[Schools Finance \(staff only\)](#)

[Multicultural Programs Unit](#)

[Records Management Unit \(staff only\)](#)

[School Safety and Response Unit \(staff only\)](#)

15.3 Further Information

Director, School Policy and Information Management (02) 9244 5070