

Sefton Infants School



Working Together

Excursion Policy & Procedures

DEFINITION

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

EDUCATIONAL VALUE

Excursions are valuable teaching and learning experiences, often integral to quality curriculum delivery in that they provide access to teaching content and learning opportunities not available at the school.

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. The rationale for any excursion should reference the school's curriculum objectives and should be relevant to their achievement.

Prior to any excursion, there must be consultation between the principal and the teacher/s concerned with its organisation. 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.

INCLUSIVITY

Excursions are inclusive, and all students in the specific learning group, including those with disabilities, are to be given the opportunity to participate. Unless exceptional circumstances exist, it is expected that all students attend an excursion and should have the opportunity to participate in an excursion.

The support needs of students with disabilities or special learning needs, including those with medical conditions will require careful consideration and consultation with parents/caregivers.

Where financial hardship is understood to be the reason for a student's non-participation, the school will endeavour to provide financial assistance. In this instance, parents/ caregivers are requested to complete a financial assistance form available from the school office in order for the school to cover excursion payments for the student for each specific excursion.

When 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.

RISK MANAGEMENT

A risk assessment is to be conducted and a risk management plan developed before approval can be given for any excursion. The principal and teacher/s organising the excursion to use risk management to ensure so far as is reasonably practicable, the health and safety of students, staff and any excursion volunteers. In addition, the principal and organising teacher/s should ensure that individual health care plans and/or behaviour risk management plans for individual students with health care needs, behavioural needs or disabilities include for the management of such conditions on excursions.

Excursion risk management plans are communicated to all participants, including staff and other adults on the excursion who may be instrumental in initiating an emergency response. Students are also informed of these plans where necessary.

Teachers planning excursions need to check relevant weather forecasts or other safety warnings, including fire bans, immediately prior to and during events. In consultation with relevant authorities, the school may alter or cancel excursions due to any emerging safety concerns. These decisions are to be communicated to students and parents as soon as possible.

Teachers leading excursions involving sporting or physical activities should also consult the Sport and Physical Activity in Schools, Safe Conduct Guidelines.

Swimming and water activities

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.

Parents must indicate the swimming ability of their child when giving consent for students to participate in excursions involving water activities. It is also necessary to determine the aquatic proficiency of students prior to participation in unstructured aquatic activity.

Excursions involving aquatic activity other than swimming (e.g. boating, sailing, board riding, etc.) need to investigate requirements relating to the provision of personal flotation devices and ensure all students and staff members comply.

DUTY OF CARE

A duty of care is owed to students in the school environment and while on excursions, whether the excursion is held during school hours, after school, on the weekend or during school holidays.

All school staff members are required to have completed and have current qualifications in e-Emergency care training and anaphylaxis training.

An appropriately equipped first aid kit must be taken on all excursions. The first aid kit must include a general use adrenaline auto injector (i.e. EpiPen) and a general use ASCIA action plan for adrenaline auto injector.

Additionally, any excursion involving swimming or water activities and any excursions involving overnight stays, includes a member of staff who possesses current accreditation in cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

Where casual staff attend and/or replace regular staff members on excursions, particular care will be taken to brief the teacher/s about any students with particular health or learning needs and the role they may have in supporting those needs. They are also to be briefed on any student who is the subject of a risk management plan. The casual teacher must have appropriate current training in child protection, e-Emergency care and anaphylaxis.

Teacher to student ratios

Students on any excursion must be the subject to direct adult supervision. The number of teachers accompanying the students for each excursion is to be determined by the principal. This decision will 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. (Please see Preschool Excursion section for further information).

Parents, Caregivers and Volunteers

Where necessary, parents, caregivers and volunteers may be invited to attend and assist with excursions organised by the school. The department's duty of care owed to students for the duration of an excursion cannot be delegated from the school to parents, caregivers or volunteers or individuals associated with external excursion venues. All parents, caregivers and volunteers accompanying an excursion must complete a Working with Children Check - Declaration for volunteers and contractors prior to the excursion.

Parents, caregivers and volunteers must be briefed on safety and behaviour measures, including student health conditions. The student and his/her parents must be advised that this is being done.

In most circumstances, parents, caregivers and volunteers who assist on excursions should not have to pay to attend.

Child Protection

All staff have a responsibility to report risk of harm concerns about children and young people and to provide support to children and young people throughout all stages of

an excursion, as they do in schools. All department staff are also required to have current child protection training as well as current Working with Children Check numbers.

CONSENT

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. The consent form must incorporate parental permission to administer medication or other support for a student's health condition. In some circumstances, consent forms may need to be translated and provided to parents in languages other than English.

Students are not able to participate in an excursion without written consent from their parents/caregivers. In exceptional circumstances, where it is not possible to obtain a signed consent form from parents/caregivers, oral approval can be sought. The principal or delegate must keep a written record of any oral approvals given by parents or caregivers. If possible, consideration will be given to confirming in writing the oral consent provided with a written email.

Parents must complete a written request for the administration of any medication. Students must not self-administer or carry medications unless there is a written agreement between the school and the student's parents/caregivers. It is the parent's responsibility to provide the medication to the school in a timely manner. The school is not able to supply medications for administration to students.

Excursion consent forms do not create any waiver of rights by the parents/caregivers in relation to their child. The main purpose of consent forms and information forms is to give enough detail to parents/caregivers to allow them to make an informed decision about whether their child should attend the excursion.

Collection of any personal information will be done in accordance with Privacy and Personal Information Act.

If parents/caregivers do not permit participation of a student in an excursion, the school will make available a sound alternative educational experience.

TRANSPORT

Safe transport or a safe walking route is to be organised for all excursions. When hiring buses or coaches for excursions, wherever practical, the school will attempt to hire buses with seatbelts. If students with disabilities are participating in an excursion, accessible transport will be organised. When organising excursions by rail, the excursion organiser/s will contact the relevant railway stations to confirm safe arrangements. Students will use the Opal cards provided by the school. The cost of rail travel will be factored in the excursion cost.

Car travel

The transporting of students in the private cars of staff members, parents/caregivers or volunteers will only occur in circumstances where there is no feasible option available to provide alternative transportation. Principals must ensure that any parents/caregivers or volunteers who transport students complete a Working with Children Check - Declaration for volunteers and contractors.

Car travel can only occur if the parent/caregiver provides written permission, the driver is licensed, the vehicle is registered, the number of students does not exceed the number of seatbelts and current driver's license and car registration details are sighted and certified prior to giving permission for the students to be transported in the vehicle. Comprehensive insurance is required if a staff member is authorised to use his/her vehicle for official business and wishes to make a claim for mileage.

STUDENT BEHAVIOUR

Students must behave appropriately at all times on excursions. Students on excursions interact with the public and are representatives of their school and community. Policies and procedures relating to the school's and department's student discipline in government schools also apply when students are on excursions. Students are to be reminded of expected standards of behaviour and the application of the school's discipline code.

In accordance with the Sefton Infants School's Student Discipline and Welfare Policy and Procedures, any student who is currently on school suspension or on a behaviour monitoring card (Level 3) at the time of the excursion, will not be able to attend the excursion.

In addition, if through the excursion risk assessment and management process, it is deemed by the principal or their delegate that a student's current behaviour poses a significant risk of danger to him/herself or others on the excursion or their current behaviour warrants supervision that cannot be safely provided on the excursion, then a member of the school executive will inform the parent/caregiver that the student will not be able to participate in this specific excursion. In this circumstance, alternative education experiences on the school site will be provided for the student of concern.

EXCURSIONS INVOLVING PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

All directions already outlined in this policy and procedures document are applicable to all excursions involving preschool children.

Excursions involving preschool children are subject to specific legislative requirements under The Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011. In particular, regulations 100, 101 and 102 deal specifically with excursions.

A thorough risk assessment will be undertaken to ensure adequate supervision at all times. Wherever possible, an adult to child ratio of 1:4 will be undertaken for preschool children.

A risk assessment must be carried out before permission is sought. 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 and given the risks posed, the number of teachers and other responsible adults that is appropriate to provide supervision and whether any specialised skills are required to ensure children's safety, the proposed activities, the likely length of time of the excursion and the items that should be taken on the excursion.

Appropriate first aid equipment must be taken on preschool excursions and at least one staff member must have approved first aid qualifications. As per K-2 excursions, the first aid kit must contain a general use adrenaline auto injector (i.e. EpiPen) and a general use ASCIA action plan. All staff must have completed approved and current anaphylaxis training.

EXCURSION ACCOUNTING AND ADMINISTRATION

The accounting requirements are outlined in the Department of Education's School Manual on Financial Management. The excursion organiser/s, along with the principal and School Administration Manager determine the costing of the excursion per student to enable all students of the specific learning group to participate. Excursions at Sefton Infants School are costed on the number of students attending to cover the costs of bus fares, venue admission, etc. Once an excursion is confirmed the school is liable to pay the full amount for the students booked to attend. No profit is made by the school when determining the costing per student of the excursion.

Payment of excursions

Parents/caregivers have the option to pay for the excursion with cash, school EFTPOS facilities or with a secure online payment. Permission notes and payments need to be placed in an envelope with the child's name, class and event clearly printed on the envelope in the school office payment box in the morning. Exact amounts are appreciated as the school is unable to deliver change. Payments must be made by the due date stated on the excursion permission note. No payments will be accepted after this date.

If a family requires financial assistance in order for a student to participate in an excursion, the parents/caregivers are requested to complete a financial assistance form available from the school office in order for the school to cover excursion payments for the student for each specific excursion.

As excursion transport and venue fees are calculated according to all students who are expected to attend the excursion, it is not possible to grant any refunds or credit

notes for any students who miss the excursion due to absence or lateness to school. If the student is unable to attend the excursion because of medical reasons, parents must inform the school in writing and the refund request must be accompanied by a doctor's certificate. If a student is withdrawn from the excursion by the school, a proportion of the excursion cost may be refunded, dependent on the amount of funds that can be recovered from the excursion providers. Refunds based on the above exceptional circumstances will only apply for excursion fees over \$10.

Insurance relating to excursions

The school or 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 on excursions. Staff members accompanying students are considered to be 'on duty' and are covered by the department's insurance arrangements.

The Ambulance Service of NSW is responsible for the state wide insurance coverage for the provision of emergency ambulance service to all enrolled NSW Government school students.

Reporting of excursion incidents

Staff leading excursions are required to report any incidents occurring while on an excursion in accordance with the department's incident reporting policy and procedures.

Retention of excursion records

Records of all excursions, including risk management plans, any advice given to parents/caregivers, costs, completed permission notes, supervision and travel details are maintained by the school. Records relating to excursions are disposed of in accordance with the department's Disposal Authorities. In the event of an injury to a student or third party or property damage during an excursion, all records must be retained for 25 years. If a child protection issue occurs during the course of an excursion, any relating documentation must be retained for 70 years.

REVIEW OF SCHOOL EXCURSION PROCEDURES

Sefton Infants School regularly reviews and updates their procedures for the safe conduct of excursions on the basis of implementation, systemic and locally produced risk profiles and the evaluation of teaching and learning outcomes.