



Walpole Primary School
Nature-Culture-Future

Excursions Policy and Procedures



Excursions

Policy

School excursions are undertaken to further students' learning and social skills development outside their normal school environment. They must have an educational purpose and be organised by a staff member and approved by the principal. Any associated costs are paid directly to the school by the parents, not to a third party.

Principals must:

- authorise a Department employee to be the Excursion Leader for any excursion undertaken by the school;
- confirm that a proposed excursion has an educational purpose;
- not endorse an excursion where activities or locations pose a safety risk;
- in the event of cancellation of an excursion, advise the school community to what purpose monies raised through fundraising will be redirected;
- establish processes for the School Council or Board to approve the costs of all optional activities (including school camps and excursions); and
- comply with the Department's insurance requirements.

The authorised excursion leader must prepare and submit the required proposal and approval forms to the principal in accordance with one of the following documents:

- Local Area Excursions;
- Excursions with Overnight Stay including Camps.

All policy and procedural statements contained within this document are lawful orders for the purposes of section 80(a) of the Public Sector Management Act 1994 (WA) and are therefore to be observed by all Department of Education employees:

- take all documentation attached to the Proposal for Excursion on the excursion;
- confirm that all external providers have minimum levels of insurance of \$20 million public liability insurance and if appropriate, \$5 million professional liability insurance; and
- confirm that the following information is current, updated in school records and accessible to staff during the excursion: approvals; permissions/consents and medical and emergency information.

Department employees must not sign waivers, indemnities, disclaimers or other documents which absolve an excursion venue or other external provider from liability for their own negligent acts or omissions; or require volunteers, parents or students over the age of 18 years to sign such documents.



Procedures

Local Area Excursions

Local Area Excursions are those that occur within relatively close proximity to the school, i.e. held within the same town/city/locale or district. Examples of local excursions include, but are not limited to, attending venues or parks in Walpole through to Albany, Pemberton and Manjimup.

Completing the Proposal

The authorised excursion leader enters information in each section of the Local Area Excursion Proposal Form in accordance with the document. Principals check each aspect of the proposal form, ticking the appropriate box only when each satisfies all requirements outlined in this document. The Proposal needs to demonstrate how planned activities will contribute to and/or enhance curriculum outcomes.

Risk Assessment

The risk assessment considers and documents:

- the number of students, their age range, and the students' experience, capacity and behaviour;
- the excursion venue/site and any potential hazards and risks associated with the proposed activities at that venue;
- the method of transport to the excursion venue and all activities;
- issues that might arise due to the length of time of the excursion and/or possible weather events;
- any medical or behavioural conditions that need to be managed; and
- any special clothing or required items that should be taken on the excursion by students and supervisors.

Excursions involving high risk activities will NOT be approved.

The excursion leader obtains information and familiarises themselves with the venue before undertaking the excursion, to determine the suitability of the venue and proposed activities, check safety procedures and investigate details such as mobile phone coverage and access for emergency services. It is acceptable to use information from other sources and Department staff who have used the venue/s previously. Staff do not necessarily need to visit the site.



Local Area Excursions

Student Capacity and Health Care

Refer to the *Student Health Care in Public Schools Policy and Procedures* for advice on managing student health care needs. Prior to an excursion, parents/carers/guardians will be requested to confirm the health information on the Information and Consent form held by the school, is current.

Current health care information for every student attending the excursion is to be attached to the *Local Area Excursion Proposal* form and taken on the excursion. A *Student Update Form* is available on SIS to facilitate the updating of health care information.

Additional health care information provided by parents/carers/guardians is attached to the Student Health Care Summary and associated health care plans.

Taking into consideration the Risk Assessment, each student's capacity is reassessed if any circumstances surrounding the excursion activity change. This includes any change in the condition of the environment or medical fitness (e.g. conditions such as asthma or epilepsy) or capacity of the student to undertake the activity.

There should be alternative activities or extra support for those students who wish to take part in the excursion, but do not have the prerequisite skills for the planned activity.

There should be alternative arrangements for any student who does not participate in an excursion.

All excursions take into consideration each students' cultural and/or personal requirements, intellectual and mental capacity, and/or degree of disability.

Supervision

The information contained in the Risk Assessment will be used to inform the decision regarding the number of adults required for the supervisory team and the experience and skills necessary to provide adequate supervision and manage identified risks.

Parents/carers/guardians are provided with full details of the excursion well in advance of the date, to enable them to make an informed decision about their child's participation. The excursion leader confirms, in writing, during the consent seeking process, that parents/carers/guardians are fully aware of all supervisory arrangements throughout the excursion.

Supervisory arrangements will include details about the number of supervisors present at activities and the roles they will perform.

All teachers are required to be available to supervise students at all times. Duty of care always rests with the teacher/s even if parents/carers/guardians are acting as supervisors.



Local Area Excursions

Supervision

In the absence of a teacher, adults who are not teachers, can be supervisors if they possess appropriate skills, experience, competencies and/or qualifications to personally care for the relevant student group and manage risks. Supervisors need to be made aware that they are required to supervise students at all times for the duration of an excursion. Supervisors need to advise the excursion leader of any medical condition or requirement that may impact their supervision responsibilities.

Collectively, the supervisory team needs to have the experience, knowledge and skills to:

- identify and establish a safe environment for the activity;
- monitor and respond to weather and environmental conditions before and during excursion activities;
- monitor and assess the physical wellbeing of the students; and
- effect a rescue and render emergency care.

For outdoor education and recreation activities, including general water-based activities, the supervisory team must hold the qualification (s) specified in the relevant section of, and the level of supervision must comply with, the *Outdoor Education and Recreation Activities for Public Schools Policy (2019)*.

Principals are to confirm compliance with the Department's *Working with Children Checks in Public Schools Policy* with regard to excursion supervisors, including volunteers if relevant. It should be noted that some volunteers may be exempt from having a Working with Children Check.

Supervision Strategies

The *Proposal* explains the supervision strategies that will maintain the safety and wellbeing of students at all times, such as walking in small groups, who will accompany students to the toilet, methods to keep students in view of the supervisors, emergency evacuation procedures etc.

Supervision strategies are to address the circumstance where students are not in clear view of the supervisor/s.

It is recommended supervisors not be permitted to take their own children on an excursion, unless the children are members of the student group for whom the excursion is intended. Where the viability of the excursion is impacted, the principal determines whether the supervisor is able to meet the duty of care requirements while supervising their own child.

Volunteers and external providers have a right to refuse a request to personally care for students and to have their decision respected by members of the teaching staff. Non-teaching staff may also refuse a request from a member of the teaching staff to care personally for students, unless the request relates to a task that they are required to perform as part of their normal duties.



Local Area Excursions

Identification of Participants

A system for the identification of excursion participants should be developed. This should take into account information from the Risk Assessment such as an assessment of the environment, students' capacity, the type of activities to be undertaken, the number of students, necessity for photo identification and the student-to-supervisor ratio. The *Proposal* includes a brief description of the system. It is expected, that at most times, school uniform is a suitable way to identify students.

All documentation is to be taken on the excursion including participant lists, parent consents, medical information and emergency contact information. Records may be carried by excursion supervisors on electronic devices.

Communication Strategies

A communication strategy is developed that enables regular communication among all members of the group which may include mobile phones, whistles and scheduling regular group meetings.

The communication strategy needs to be explained to all participants and clearly identify:

- a signal for gaining the group's attention;
- an emergency signal and response that has been rehearsed prior to the commencement of the excursion; and
- an alternative mode of communication should the primary communication method be unavailable.

Mobile telephones should not be relied on as the sole method of communication. In remote rural locations, consideration is to be given to other means of emergency communication, such as an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB), a satellite telephone or a pre-determined schedule of check-ins with a nominated contact at the school.

Briefing Students and Supervisors

The excursion leader needs to clearly communicate all relevant information about respective responsibilities and obligations to students and supervisors including:

- emergency procedures and signals;
- methods of communication;
- appropriate use of any equipment;
- roles of supervisors;
- the system for identifying students and supervisors;
- areas demarcated specifically for identified student groups; and
- standards of acceptable behaviour.

Alcohol and other drugs that impair judgment are prohibited from consumption by supervisors during an excursion.



Local Area Excursions

Transport Arrangements

Vehicles used to transport students on school excursions must comply with relevant laws regarding the restraint of children. For more information, visit the [Road Safety Commission](#) website.

Excursion leaders must confirm that students are wearing any seat belts that are available. If anchor points (for child restraints) or lap sash seat belts (for booster seats) are available in the bus, the use of a restraint that is appropriate to the age and size of the child should be encouraged, where feasible.

Principals verify any bus drivers contacted by the school have a current Working with Children Check. Principals verify school staff who drive vehicles with a seating capacity in excess of 12 persons have a valid 'F' extension on their licence. Our current school buses and drivers are fully compliant.

The use of private vehicles can only be authorised by the principal where there is no other reasonable option. Vehicles used to transport students are required to have comprehensive motor vehicle insurance cover and be suitable for such use. Principals are to sight a current valid driver's licence for all drivers.

Where parents/carers/guardians have given approval for their child to make their own transport arrangements to and/or from a venue, a member of the supervisory team needs to acknowledge the arrival and approve the departure of the student from the venue.

If a student is required to leave an excursion prior to the scheduled time, a member of the supervisory team needs to be satisfied that appropriate arrangements are in place for the student to safely reach their destination.

If a transport related accident occurs, the principal is required to submit a claim to RiskCover. Forms can be downloaded from the Department's [Finance for Schools](#) website. Further information on insurance is available from Legal Services by emailing legalservices@education.wa.edu.au.

Location and Venues

Information on the suitability of the location and venue/s relative to the students' skills and experience, the planned activities and the supervision required may be sought from:

- personally visiting the venue or site (if local);
- Traditional Owners, Knowledge Holders, Elders and local Aboriginal community members regarding protocols associated with places or materials of cultural significance;
- the Education Regional Office closest to the venue/s;
- the local Government Authority Environmental Health or Building Services Department;
- [Department of Fire and Emergency Services](#) or the local Police;
- the [Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions](#) or the local land manager (for natural sites such as beaches or forests);
- other schools that have visited the venue or site within the last six months;
- the external provider or tour organiser.



Local Area Excursions

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- the Education Regional Office closest to the venue/s;
- the local Government Authority Environmental Health or Building Services Department;
- Department of Fire and Emergency Services or the local Police;
- the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions or the local land manager (for natural sites such as beaches or forests);
- other schools that have visited the venue or site within the last six months;
- the external provider or tour organiser; or
- the *Outdoor Education and Recreation Activities for Public Schools Policy (2019)*.

An evacuation plan and who manages an evacuation is identified, included in the Supervision Strategies and communicated to all members of the supervisory team.

Department employees must not sign waivers, indemnities, disclaimers or other documents which absolve an excursion venue or other external provider from liability for their own negligent acts or omissions.

External Providers

The *Proposal* includes the name and contact details of all external providers, and an explanation of the provider's suitability and why they are the preferred provider. The suitability of an external provider may be determined from the verbal or written information they provide related to:

- recent experience (including maintained log books);
- current qualifications, accreditation and any other relevant training; and
- public liability insurance (see Section 14 *Insurance Cover for External Providers* (page 7) for insurance cover information).

Where an external provider is engaged:

- the respective responsibilities of staff need to be clearly established with the manager of the venue/external provider; and
- any adult involved in activities with students needs to have a current *Working with Children Check* in accordance with the Department's *Working with Children Checks in Public Schools Policy*.



Local Area Excursions

External Provider Insurance

To cover their legal liability, external providers have at least the following minimum levels of insurance:

- public liability insurance of \$20 million; and
- if appropriate, professional liability insurance of \$5 million.

The excursion leader must obtain a copy of the external provider's Certificate of Currency and attach to all excursions proposals.

Specific accident cover is provided by the Department's insurer for personal injuries to all students when on excursions.

For further information, download the most recent version of the Department of Education *Insurance and Claims Management Guide (Guide)*. The Guide is intended for internal Department use only. Further information on insurance is available from Legal Services by emailing legalservices@education.wa.edu.au.

Emergency Response Planning

The *Proposal* includes a brief outline of the emergency response plan; however, depending on the complexity of the excursion, it may be appropriate to prepare a more detailed plan that is made available to the excursion supervisory team and the principal.

During an excursion, a nominated supervisor has ready access to:

- a list of the names of participating students and their parents/carers/guardians contact telephone numbers;
- the *Student Health Care Plans and Health Care Authorisations* of those students who are known to have health conditions that require support while in the care of the school; and
- relevant health information of supervisors.

Staff at the school are to be able to contact excursion supervisors and provide support for students or their families if required. Copies of all documentation including the proposal, approvals, parent/carer/guardian consents, participant lists and updated emergency medical and contact information, must be accessible to staff at the school during the excursion.

The use of local first aid and emergency services should be investigated as part of an emergency response plan. First aid equipment needs to be available for the immediate treatment or care of a student or supervisor who is injured or becomes ill during an excursion.

Many outdoor education and recreation activities require that a member of the supervisory team hold a current first aid certificate, including a current cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) qualification (see the *Outdoor Education and Recreation Activities for Public Schools Policy (2019)*).



Local Area Excursions

Emergency Response Planning

Mobile telephones should not be relied on as the sole method of communication. In remote rural locations, consideration should be given, where necessary, to other means of emergency communication, such as an Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) or a satellite telephone.

A response plan needs to be developed that includes access to emergency support without compromising the safety and welfare of the group or casualty. Emergency procedures, including emergency signals, need to be clearly understood by all students and supervisors. All supervisors need to be familiar with evacuation procedures and, where appropriate, the location of emergency equipment.

Costing of Excursion

The excursion leader needs to calculate the cost of the excursion as accurately as possible to determine the appropriate price to be charged. To comply with the Department's Accounting Procedures, schools are encouraged to download and use the [Pricing Instructions \(Camps and Excursions\)](#) and the [Worksheet \(Camps and Excursions\)](#) available from the [Finance for Schools](#) website.

Parents/carers/guardians are to be advised if the costs to students are subsidising the travel and accommodation expenses of the supervising team.

Fundraising and refunds are to be undertaken in accordance with the *Camps and Excursions Planning Guidelines* available from the [Finance for Schools](#) website.

Record Keeping

The principal must verify that relevant excursion information is retained by the school in accordance with [Records Management Manual for School, College and Campus](#) and [Records Management Policy](#).



Local Area Excursions

Parent/ Guardian Consent

The excursion leader needs to provide parents/carers/guardians with full details of the excursion well in advance of the date, to enable them to make an informed decision about their child's participation. This information includes full details of:

- the purpose of the excursion;
- date/s;
- activities to be undertaken;
- duration of activity(ies);
- location of activity(ies);
- student contact arrangements during the excursion;
- transport arrangements;
- cost;
- information about fundraising activities including notification of the Department's guidelines for refunds of fundraising monies. See the Camps and Excursions Planning Guidelines for appropriate wordings;
- supervision to be provided (number of supervisors and number of students) including person responsible for First Aid;
- staff action in case of student accident, illness or inappropriate behaviour on the excursion;
- liability for loss or damage to student property and medical costs incurred in case of accident or illness;
- any potential losses that may be incurred due to unforeseen cancellations; and
- any special clothing or other items required.

Interpreter and translator services should be used as required to provide the parents/carers/guardians of culturally and linguistically diverse students with the necessary information regarding the excursion.

Students participating in an excursion only engage in activities for which parent's/carer's/guardian's permission has been obtained.



Procedures

Excursions with Overnight Stay Including Camps

Excursions with overnight stays include camps and occur within Western Australia, requiring accommodation for any period of time.

The Proposal for Excursions with Overnight Stay Including Camps needs to demonstrate how planned activities will contribute to and/or enhance curriculum outcomes.

The authorised excursion leader enters information in each section of the *Proposal for Excursions with Overnight Stay Including Camps* form in accordance with this *Excursion with Overnight Stay Including Camps* document. Principals are to clearly check each aspect of the proposal forms, ticking the appropriate box only when each satisfies all requirements outlined in this document. Additional documents can be listed and attached where applicable.

All of the requirements for Overnight Stays include the previous information for local area excursions. Below is extra information required.

Risk Assessment

The excursion leader assesses risks that the excursion may pose to the safety, health or wellbeing of any student or staff, and proposes strategies for minimising and managing those risks.

Risk assessment for overnight stays includes:

- safety and suitability of the selected accommodations;
- the safety and suitability of any billeting arrangements;
- issues that might arise due to the length of time of the excursion and/or possible weather events.

Accommodation

Single gender student groups have at least one supervisor of the same gender. Mixed gender student groups have a mixed gender supervisory team unless all parents/carers/guardians have approved of alternatives during the consent seeking process.

The logistics of excursions are to be discussed with transgender or intersex students and their parent/carer/guardian prior to the confirmation of the student's participation in the event. Discussion should include options, risks and mitigating factors.

Supervisory and accommodation arrangements, especially for sleeping and ablutions must not place supervisors in a position where there is potential for allegations of improper conduct or where the propriety of their behaviour may be questioned.



Excursions with Overnight Stay Including Camps

Billeting

When planning an excursion that involves students being billeted, the following actions must be undertaken by the excursion leader:

- advise the parent(s) in the host family of their responsibilities.
- confirm the parent(s) in the host family have completed an *Undertaking to Provide a Billet* form giving an assurance to provide a safe and secure home environment for each billeted student.
- confirm that where students are billeted in a host family, all adults on the premises during the period of the billet have a valid Working with Children Check.
- confirm that a nominated member of the supervisory team:
 - ♦ is contactable for the duration of the billet;
 - ♦ contacts the student(s) regularly (daily) during the period of the billet to monitor and assess the student(s) emotional and physical wellbeing (this could be achieved via the use of identified strategies such as use of student daily journals);
 - ♦ has access to transport in order to visit the student(s) at short notice;
 - ♦ will remove the student(s) from the host family immediately if it is determined a student(s) is at risk or the placement is compromised, and makes appropriate alternative arrangements;
 - ♦ has current professional learning regarding child abuse and abuse prevention and/or knowledge of the Department's *Child Protection in Department of Education Sites Policy and Procedures*; and
 - ♦ has provided student(s) with key messages from the protective behaviours program prior to any overnight billet as part of the preparation, as deemed appropriate by the school.
- confirms that the accommodation includes:
 - ♦ a private bedroom or one shared with a student of the same gender (where a student is one sex but expresses the gender identity of a different sex, an assessment needs to be undertaken as to whether their gender identity can be safely accommodated);
 - ♦ private bathing and toilet facilities;
 - ♦ any special requirements (e.g. avoidance of asthma triggers);
 - ♦ there is no exposure to passive smoking.

It is recommended that the authorising principal makes contact with the principal of a school in the locality where the billeting is to occur and seeks information regarding the suitability of host families and the billeting arrangements. The principal needs to confirm that parents/carers/guardians are fully informed of the processes undertaken by the host school to confirm the suitability of the family with whom the student is to be billeted, prior to providing consent to participate for their child to participate in the excursion.



Excursions with Overnight Stay Including Camps

Costing

The excursion leader needs to calculate the cost of the excursion as accurately as possible to determine the appropriate price to be charged. To comply with the Department's Accounting Procedures, schools are encouraged to download and use the *Pricing Instructions (Camps and Excursions)* and the *Worksheet (Camps and Excursions)* available from the [Finance for Schools](#) website.

Parents/carers/guardians are to be advised if the costs to students are subsidising the travel and accommodation expenses of the supervising team.

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Excursions

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