



HUNTERS HILL PUBLIC SCHOOL

Excursion Guidelines & Procedures

Definition:

- At Hunters Hill Public School, school excursions are structured learning experiences provided by our school which are conducted externally to the school site.

Delegation for Approval of Excursions:

- School excursions within Australia are initiated, organised and supervised by school teaching staff and must be approved and endorsed by the principal. When more than one school is involved, the principals of all participating schools must approve and endorse the excursion.

Review of Hunters Hill Public School Excursion Procedures:

- Hunters Hill Public School will review and update excursion procedures annually to ensure the safe conduct of excursions. Risk assessments and the evaluation of teaching and learning outcomes achieved through excursions will also be reviewed annually.

Educational Value:

- Teachers and the principal must consider the educational value of proposed excursions in relation to the overall needs and resources of the school.
- The rationale for any excursion should relate directly to student learning outcomes and be relevant to their achievement.
- Prior to the excursion there must be consultation between the principal and teacher/s concerned with the organisation.
- Parents and caregivers must be provided in written form the details of any excursion, including details of all planned activities, their educational value, method of transport and level of supervision. Permission notes need to be distributed to students at least 4 weeks prior to the scheduled excursion to allow for sufficient time to check return permission notes.

Inclusivity:

- **Excursions are inclusive, and all students in the specific learning group, including those with disabilities, are to be given the opportunity to participate.**
- Costs need to be mindful to ensure that there is no undue financial burden imposed to families. Where financial hardship is understood to be the reason for a student's non-participation, schools must endeavour to provide financial assistance.

- 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.
- 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. Reasonable adjustments must be made to enable a student with a disability to participate in an excursion.
- Individual health care plans must be reviewed prior to excursions to confirm that any necessary planning and emergency arrangements are in place.

Duty of Care:

- 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.
Teaching staff at Hunters Hill Public School have the Duty of Care of students at all times.
- 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.
- All school staff are required to have completed e-Emergency Care Training and Anaphylaxis Training.
- The appropriate equipped red 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 and an ASCIA action plan for adrenaline auto injector.
- Additionally, the principal is 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.
- Teaching 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.
- Particular care will 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.

Teacher to Student Ratios:

- 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.
- Principal determines the number of teachers required for an excursion using the Department's statements on class sizes.
- 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.
- **Students on excursions must be subject to direct adult supervision and should not be allowed to 'go off on their own'.**

Overnight Excursions:

- 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.
- For coeducational groups, male and female staff supervisors are required.

Parents, Carers and Volunteers:

- **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.**
- 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.
- 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.
- Principal is to ensure that all parents, caregivers and volunteers accompanying students on a school excursion complete a Working With Children Check.

Risk Management:

- **A risk assessment is to be conducted and a risk management plan developed before approval can be given for any excursion.**
- The WH&S Act and Regulation requires the principal 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.

- Principal will 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.
- 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.
- **Risk Management Plans are to be communicated to all staff it involves as well as other adults attending who may be instrumental in initiating an emergency response.**

Special Requirements:

- Where a particular excursion activity requires special protective equipment or apparel (e.g. hard hats, helmets for snowboarding), these must be used.
- Staff and students 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.

Swimming and Water Activities:

- Where any excursion involves swimming or water activities, the principal must ensure that the eight elements of the Water Safety Guidelines for Unstructured Aquatic Activity are complied with.
- Parents must be asked to indicate the swimming ability of their children when giving consent for students to participate in excursions involving water activities.
- 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.
- It is necessary to determine the aquatic proficiency of students prior to participation in unstructured aquatic activity.
- When 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.

Additional Activities:

- 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).

Consent:

- **Signed consent forms granting permission for students to participate in an excursion and a medical information form are to be obtained from the parents or caregivers.**
- Parents and 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.
- Students being signed out early at an excursion by a parent or caregiver, must sign the student out on a class roll and indicate the time a student is taken. Class rolls to be submitted to school office on return from the excursion.
- Students being driven to a venue by private car with an adult other than their parents, must have permission to do so. If students are not picked up the local police are to be called.
- Students leaving school grounds for an excursion for part of a school day with parents or another adult, must be signed out at the office and signed back into the office on their return. Parents must attend the office with the students to sign out and in.

Medication:

- In general, we do not administer medication which has not been specifically requested by a medical practitioner for an individual student for a specific condition.
- 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.
- We do not supply medications for administration to students.
- Medical information held by the school should, however, be updated at least annually and as required and take account the activities proposed for the excursion.
- 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.

Check if the information provided by the parent is unclear:

- 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.

Consent Forms Covering Multiple Excursions:

- 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.

- If a significant variation in the activities occurs, a separate consent form is required.

Student Participation in the Absence of Consent:

- Students without a signed consent form from a parent or caregiver must not be permitted to participate in a school excursion.
- 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.

Transport:

- 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.
- When organising an excursion by rail, principals should contact their local railway station concerning excursion concessions and other arrangements.
- If students with disabilities are participating in an excursion accessible transport will be required.
- 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:
 - written permission from the parent(s) or caregiver(s) of the student(s) being transported is obtained
 - the vehicle is registered
 - the number of passengers in the vehicle does not exceed the number of seatbelts
 - current driver's license and car registration details are sighted by the school prior to giving permission for students to be transported in the vehicle.
- The principal must ensure that all parents, caregivers or volunteers who transport students in cars complete a Working With Children Check.
- The principal may approve air travel in Australia to enable students and teachers to travel to distant centres. The 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.

Student Behaviour:

- 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 (before PSSA, before walking to HHHS).

- 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.

Reporting of Incidents Occurring while on Excursions:

- 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 and Communities; or is an incident which WorkCover describes as a 'serious incident' which must be reported by law.

Retention of Excursion Records:

- The principal 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.
- Teaching staff hold on to all excursion permission notes for the year. At the end of the school year, an excursion envelope is given to all staff. All permission notes placed in the envelope, returned to the school office for safe storage for 7 years.

Briefing Students Prior to Excursions:

- Prior to any excursion, students should be briefed on the school's expectations of their behaviour.
- Students should also be briefed about their right to be safe and protected, about protective strategies and of avenues for support should concerns arise.
- 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.