

POLICY TITLE: EXCURSIONS
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1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 Educational excursions should provide enriching experiences for students in a variety of environments.
- 1.2 Schools should plan excursions in the context of the total educational program of the school.
- 1.3 Schools are responsible for ensuring the total cost of all excursions is met.
- 1.4 Each ACT Government school has established an Equity Fund to which the government has contributed, to be used to support students who might otherwise not be in a position to take advantage of opportunities such as excursions. Principals should inform their communities of the existence of the fund and the procedures parents and students should follow to request financial support.
- 1.5 Before course choices are made, parents of high school and college students must be advised that additional expenses may be involved for excursions planned as part of a course.
- 1.6 Exchange of information between schools and parents should be in writing wherever possible and any verbal communication confirmed in writing.

2. Rationale

- 2.1 This policy:
 - covers all excursions including local and overnight, excluding those outlined in 2.2
 - outlines principals' responsibilities in relation to the out of school movement of students and staff
 - sets out requirements to help ensure the health and safety of students on excursions.
- 2.2 This policy does not cover the following situations:
 - work experience and vocational education placements
 - overseas excursions

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- overseas student exchanges which are arranged through private organisations
- ‘students only’ excursions which are required by particular high school or college programs. Where it is proposed that an individual or small group of students participate in this type of activity (such as when a student is a representative on an external committee and is required to attend meetings during school hours), it may be necessary for part or all of the activity to take place without the direct supervision of a staff member. In such circumstances, parents must be fully informed of, and agree to, the arrangements, and the principal and the teacher in charge of the activity must take steps to ensure the safety and welfare of the unaccompanied students.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 An **excursion** is a school-related activity by students, under the supervision of a teacher/s, directly related to the curriculum of the school. An excursion is a variation to normal activity and is not predominantly recreational. Excursions generally fall into the following categories:

Category	Description
A	Movement, generally on foot or by bicycle in the vicinity of the school or a variation to normal activity
B	Excursions other than Category A within the ACT
C	Excursions which involve day travel beyond the ACT
D	Excursions which include overnight accommodation regardless of the distance from the school

- 3.2 **Teacher in charge** refers to the teacher nominated by the principal to have ultimate responsibility and therefore authority for the duration of the excursion.
- 3.3 Legal **duty of care** requires that accompanying adults should take all reasonable measures to ensure the health and safety of any school student under their care. This duty of care will arise whenever a student/school relationship exists. Primary responsibility remains with the teacher in charge.
- 3.4 **Parents.** In this policy, a **parent** includes a **carer**. Under the *Children and Young People Act 1999* a parent is a person having parental responsibility for the child and a carer is a person who is a carer under that Act.
- 3.5 **Informed consent** means that parents give written agreement to their child participating in an excursion after they have been made aware of the supervision details of the excursion and the risks and associated costs involved.
- 3.6 **Accompanying adults** include teachers, school administrative staff, parents, activity leaders and volunteers.

3.7 **Home school** in this policy means the school or organisation (sporting, music, etc) that billeted students normally attend, or the school or organisation with which billeted students are travelling.

3.8 **Host school** means the school or organisation that facilitates the billeting arrangements, usually by nominating host families.

4. Responsibilities

4.1 It is the **responsibility of the principal** to ensure that:

- the excursion is directly related to the curriculum and not predominantly recreational. Excursions are generally considered to be an optional enrichment activity.
- parents are aware that an excursion is generally an optional enrichment activity and that parents will have to cover the costs incurred.
- all participating teaching staff know the requirements of this policy and other relevant Directorate and school policies, supervision requirements and safety procedures. If Directorate policy is not followed, staff may not be afforded the Directorate's protection under the principle of vicarious liability i.e. where an employer bears the cost of damages resulting from an employee's negligence.
- accompanying adults are advised of their responsibilities and relevant Directorate and school policies and the consequences of non compliance.
- all requirements contained in the *School Management Manual* (Financial Management Section, and other relevant areas) for planning and accounting for monies are met.
- if the planned excursion is a Category C or D excursion, an *Excursions - Risk Assessment proforma* (see Attachment 5) is undertaken in relation to the safety of the participants. For Category A and B excursions, the completion of an *Excursions - Risk Assessment proforma* is recommended but not mandatory.
- an assessment has been undertaken to determine that a private provider meets the following criteria relevant to the excursion activity and any risks involved:
 - * the provider's staff are trained to the industry standards required to supervise the activity and accreditation is sighted
 - * the provider meets industry standards and accreditation is sighted
 - * the provider has a risk management and/or safety plan relevant to the activity and it is sighted
 - * the provider has appropriate insurance including at least a \$20 million Public Liability cover for any one event.
- parents are aware of any Disclaimer Statements from private providers and make their own informed decision about whether to participate.
- supervision is adequate in relation to the number and needs of students, their maturity, anticipated behaviour and the activities planned (see section 5).

- arrangements are made for any student unable to participate in an excursion by having alternative activities and/or strategies available. Students with a disability should have an equal opportunity to participate in excursions. Principals must therefore consider what reasonable adjustments may be made to allow a student with a disability to participate in an excursion.
- staff are aware of their obligations under *Section 9 of the Public Sector Management Act 1994* and (non-Directorate) accompanying adults are aware of their obligations under the *Working with Children and Young People – Volunteering Policy*.
- accompanying adults are aware that they must not drink alcohol during hours of duty or when they have a continuing responsibility for students. This includes school excursions/outdoor adventure activities and any other school activity that may be held outside ordinary school hours.
- copies of emergency contacts and procedures and contingency plans are kept in the school and by the teacher in charge of the excursion (refer to *Emergency Management Framework*).

4.2 It is the **responsibility of the teacher in charge**:

- to know and to comply with the requirements of related and relevant policies.
- to ensure that students and parents are aware of supervision and transport arrangements.
- where private or hire vehicles are used, to advise the owner and/or driver to have appropriate insurance cover as highlighted in Section 11.
- to give consideration to those occasions when it is desirable for a participating staff member to have a current first aid certificate and an appropriately stocked and maintained first aid kit to be carried.
- to ensure that all accompanying adults are appropriately screened, qualified and/or experienced and are advised of their responsibilities and relevant Directorate and school policies and safety procedures (refer to the *Working with Children and Young People – Volunteering policy*).
- to gain informed consent by ensuring that parental information, medical and consent forms are issued where appropriate and completed and returned prior to the excursion (see attachments).
- to ensure *Excursion Medical Information and Consent Forms* (refer to First Aid Policy, Appendix) are provided to parents for Category B, C and D excursions.
- to ensure *Excursion Medical Information and Consent Forms* and *General Management and Emergency Treatment Plans* (refer to First Aid Policy, Appendix) are carried on Category C and D excursions and to be aware of relevant medical conditions for Category A and B excursions.
- to develop emergency contacts and procedures for all excursions. Copies of these contacts and procedures must be taken on Category C and D excursions.
- where students are to be accommodated in billets, to ensure that the procedures detailed in Section 8 are followed.

- to ensure the cultural and religious needs of all students are considered and met in both the preparation stage of the excursion and whilst on the excursion.
- for overnight excursions, to ensure that girls and boys are not accommodated in the same rooms.
- to ensure that students over 18 years of age are asked to indicate in writing their preparedness to accept the recommended procedures and supervision necessary for the safety and comfort of the group (Attachment 8).

4.3 It is the responsibility of accompanying adults to exercise their duty of care throughout an excursion and ensure that Directorate and school policies are followed.

4.4 For students over the age of 18, the teacher in charge should obtain parental agreement to their participation in the excursion.

5. Supervision Requirements

5.1 Accompanying adults may be used to meet the supervision requirement provided the principal is satisfied there are sufficient teachers to maintain adequate control of the whole excursion, and to control each activity. Additional adults should accompany excursions when extra care is considered necessary for the safety and welfare of students.

Category	Category Description	Gender Balance	Minimum Supervision Ratios
A	Vicinity of the school/ variation to normal activity	not required	1 teacher per class group
B	Within the ACT	to be considered by principal	1 teacher per class group
C	Day travel beyond the ACT	to be considered by principal	2 adults per class group including 1 teacher
D	Overnight accommodation: single gender mixed gender	- not required - required	1 adult per 20 students with a minimum of 2 adults per excursion Teachers must comprise at least half the number of accompanying adults.

5.3 Additional information for **Category D** excursions:

- For mixed groups of boys and girls both genders must be represented amongst the accompanying adults.

- For groups of either all boys or all girls on overnight excursions, there must be at least one teacher of the same gender as the students.
- Parents, activity leaders and volunteers may be used to meet the gender balance requirement (see 3.6). However screening requirements set out in the *Working with Children and Young People – Volunteering Policy* must be adhered to.
- Responsibility for and control of the excursion remains with the teacher in charge.

6. Outdoor Adventure Activities

- 6.1 When outdoor adventure activities or sporting fixtures are included in excursions, the procedures in the *Outdoor Adventure Activities Policy & Mandatory Procedures* and/or the *Health, Physical Education & Sport Policy & Guidelines* must be followed as appropriate.
- 6.2 The relevant requirements set out in the *Outdoor Adventure Activities Mandatory Procedures* or the *Health, Physical Education & Sport Guidelines* must be followed for all occasions when students are engaged in swimming/water activities, irrespective of the duration of the activities.

7. Parent consent and medical forms

- 7.1 Notification of **Category A excursions** must be sent to parents.
- 7.2 **Category B excursions.** Full details of each excursion, together with the *Excursion Medical Information and Consent Form*, must be sent to parents to complete and return to the school prior to the excursion (see attachments for sample form/s).
- 7.3 On sequential excursions of a similar nature multiple parent consent forms are not required for Category A and B excursions. Parents must advise of any changed medical requirements and/or other needs prior to each excursion.
- 7.4 **Category C and D excursions.** Full details of each excursion or series of related excursions, together with the *Excursion Medical Information and Consent Form*, must be sent to parents to complete and return to the school prior to the excursion (see attachments).
- 7.5 While the use of the *Excursion Medical Information and Consent Form* does not absolve schools and teachers from liability as a result of an act of negligence, it is evidence of care and parent awareness to have forms completed, returned to the school and retained on file. In the event of an accident/incident these forms should be attached to the Student Accident/Incident Report Form and forwarded to the Risk Management and Audit Section (refer to *Student Accidents* policy).

8. Billeting

- 8.1 Billeting is a means of providing low cost accommodation for students attending interstate excursions and relies on the goodwill of host families. The following procedures aim to ensure that billeting experiences are a safe and enriching experience for both students and host families and recognise the Directorate's duty to take reasonable steps to prevent harm to students.
- 8.2 The information collected on the *Nomination to Billet a Student* form may only be used to administer the placement of billeted students. Only the contact details of the host family may be provided to the parents of billeted students

and the home or host school. All information contained on this form is personal information and must be stored, used and disclosed in accordance with the requirements of the *Privacy Act 1998* and the *Freedom of Information Act 1989* (Attachment 7).

Responsibilities as a Home School

- 8.3 These responsibilities apply in all instances in which a student participating in an excursion subject to this policy is billeted.
- 8.4 The *Nomination to Billet a Student* form must be completed before an excursion commences.
- 8.5 It is the responsibility of the **teacher in charge** to ensure that:
- the principal has approved the excursion and signed the *Nomination to Billet a Student* form (Attachment 7) prior to the excursion.
 - students and their parents are briefed beforehand in writing that there may be different social behaviours and cultural expectations with some families. While students should be encouraged to adapt to these differences, they should be made aware that the teacher in charge will support them.
 - the host school attempts to match students by age, sex and cultural factors and that the billeting parents are aware of certain minimum expectations for accommodation. These should include at least single gender bedrooms and privacy in washing and toilet facilities. Billeting parents should also be aware of any student's special needs/medical requirements.
 - reasonable steps are taken to anticipate risk situations for students and to plan and, if necessary, implement strategies to address them, including ensuring there is accommodation in reserve for students who need to be relocated.
 - billets are monitored on a regular basis to ensure that students are successfully placed. This may be done by one of the following:
 - visiting students at their billet
 - telephoning students at their billet
 - having students telephone the teacher in charge
 - other daily contact.
 - if a problem arises, students are given the opportunity to indicate this in a discreet manner. When the contact is by telephone, the teacher in charge should ask questions requiring a 'yes' or 'no' answer so that the student is able to reply without embarrassment.
 - they have a list of all students, with the address and telephone numbers of their billeting families
 - students and billeting parents are provided with the address and telephone number at which a staff member can be contacted in the event of unforeseen problems with the billeting arrangements.
- 8.6 It is the responsibility of the **principal** to:
- assess billet placements for suitability and sign the *Nomination to Billet a Student* form (Attachment 7).

- ensure that appropriate arrangements, including contingency plans, have been made for students in billeted accommodation before giving final approval for the excursion.

Responsibilities as a Host School

- 8.7 The *Nomination to Billet a Student* form should be completed for excursions in which an ACT Government school acts as a host school and the home school does not have a comparable form.
- 8.8 The principal of an ACT host school should undertake a pre-assessment before passing on contact details to home school principals. Disclosure of declared incidents/offences must not be passed on without the express permission of the person to whom the disclosure relates. The responsibility of assessing the suitability and final approval of a billet placement remains that of the home school in all instances.

Exceptional Circumstances

- 8.9 It is preferable that the *Nomination to Billet a Student* form is completed and returned in all instances specified above. However, the Directorate recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances which do not permit the form to be completed and returned prior to the excursion. In such circumstances, principals may contact the relevant host school principal or host family to obtain a verbal disclosure and/or reference. Principals must note steps taken and outcome on the *Nomination to Billet a Student Form*. (See Chart Requirements as a HOST school)

9. Accidents

- 9.1 The teacher in charge should abide by the *Student Accidents* policy and the procedures to be followed in the event of an accident.
- 9.2 In serious cases where medical attention is obviously necessary and a parent is not available, the teacher in charge or the billet parents should send for an ambulance or a doctor, whichever is appropriate, or arrange transport to the nearest or most convenient medical facility.
- 9.3 The choices stipulated by the parent on the *Excursion Medical Information and Consent Form* should be respected where possible.
- 9.4 Parents must be advised as soon as practicable of action taken in an emergency.

10. Use of Transport

- 10.1 On each occasion informed parental consent must be given in writing for their children to travel by public transport, government plated and private plated buses, or by private car driven by a staff member, parent, other adult or student. (See also section 11.6 below).
- 10.2 Where private or hire vehicles are used, each owner and/or driver must:
- carry the required licence
 - have valid insurance which is appropriate to the excursion
 - ensure that the vehicle is registered and roadworthy
 - ensure that the seatbelt provision of the vehicle is not exceeded.
- 10.3 A student's vehicle should only be used if the driver has a current driver's licence. If a student driver has not attained the age of 18 years parents must

consent in writing to the vehicle being used to transport other students. Student passengers (under the age of 18 years) also require written permission to travel in another student's car.

- 10.4 For bus transport the registered carrying capacity must not be exceeded. Wherever possible, students should be transported in buses with seatbelts. Seatbelts are essential for all excursions involving interstate travel.

10.5 **Contracting coach services for excursions**

Schools should ensure that coach operators who are contracted for excursions are accredited to operate a bus service in the ACT. The onus is on the school to know whether the company has appropriate accreditation. *Note:* Students and staff on buses without appropriate accreditation are not covered by third party insurance. Moreover, schools may be abetting an offence where, knowingly or ignorantly, an unlicensed operator is contracted.

Buses with accreditation in the ACT may be identified by 'MO' plates which have black lettering on a yellow background. Companies are also issued with a specific accreditation certificate. A list of accredited operators is located on the Road Transport website at:

<http://www.transport.act.gov.au/busoperatorsaccredited.html>

- 10.6 The Department of Urban Services advises that:

- the person in charge of the vehicle must ensure that every child travelling in a private vehicle is using a suitable restraining device
- children under eight years of age should be restrained in the rear seating positions first
- a front seat should only be used by a child when all of the rear seating positions are already occupied by children. In these circumstances the largest child should be seated in the front.

11. Insurance

- 11.1 ACT Government schools and programs do not meet all claims for injury, disease or illness to students resulting from school activities or school-organized excursions. The ACT Government (the Territory) meets claims (including claims resulting from school activities and excursions) against it where there is a liability to do so. Liability is not automatic and depends on the circumstances in which the injury was sustained. The Education and Training Directorate as an agency of the territory has insurance arrangements in place in order to meet such liabilities. Parents should obtain their own advice about insurance protection which may assist in meeting expenses if their child is injured in circumstances where there is no liability on the part of the Territory.
- 11.2 **Staff.** Under the principle of vicarious liability, ACT Government employees, in the course of their employment, are protected in law should legal action be initiated, provided they have acted responsibly, within their level of competence, and followed established policies and guidelines and with proper motive.
- 11.3 **Contractors/Consultants.** Contractors and consultants such as leaders and resource persons are not covered for insurance purposes. The school should advise contractors to ensure that they have workers' compensation, public liability, personal accident and professional liability cover sufficient for the nature of the work they are undertaking.

- 11.4 **Volunteers.** The ACT Government has limited public liability and personal accident insurance cover for volunteers in the service of the Territory. This does not include personal property insurance. Certain exclusions apply without prior agreement, including pop and rock concerts, motor sports and competitive sporting events. Refer to the *Working with Children and Young People – Volunteering Policy* and to the *Public Sector Management Best Practice Notes* (Chapter 6.3, page 16).
- 11.5 **Non-participants.** Persons at a school organised activity who are not participants in the activity (eg. siblings, friends, grandparents) are not afforded insurance cover by the Directorate for public liability or personal accident.
- 11.6 **Public transport/Hire cars or buses.** The Directorate does not provide insurance cover in respect of the use of public transport or private vehicles. Where private or hire vehicles are used, the owner and/or driver must ensure that they carry the required licence and that the vehicle is registered and roadworthy. Owners/drivers need to ensure the insurance cover is valid and appropriate for the excursion and that loading does not exceed the seat belt provision of the vehicle.
- 11.7 **Ambulance transport.** The ACT Ambulance Service provides free ambulance transport for students who are injured or suddenly become ill at school or during school-approved activities within the ACT. There are no reciprocal arrangements with other state or territory ambulance services. Jervis Bay Primary School students do not receive free ambulance cover.

- Attachments**
1. Excursion Information for Parents - sample letter to parents with excursion details
 2. Excursion Information for Parents - sample permission note to parents
 3. Excursion Information for Parents - sample letter to parents for medical information
 4. Excursion Medical Information and Consent Form
 5. Risk Assessment Pro Forma
 6. Billeting Procedure Flow Chart
 7. Nomination to Billet a Student – sample letter and form
 8. Code of Conduct
 9. Teacher Checklist (optional)

Related policies:

Accidents – Schools and other Workplaces
Alcohol – Possession and Consumption in Schools and at School – related Activities
Emergency Management Framework
First Aid and Health
Health, Physical Education and Sport Policy and Guidelines
Overseas Excursions
Outdoor Adventure Activities
Statement on Requesting Financial Contributions from Parents
Sun Protection
Working with Children and Young People – Volunteering Policy